



# messing about in **BOATS**

Volume 32 – Number 9

January 2015

**Special Features This Issue**  
1st Annual PlyWooden Boat Festival  
A Baja/Utah Sailing Adventure – Canoeing Mahone Bay  
Hooligan – Can it be Done? – Sjogin's Story  
The Case for Poly Laminate Sails



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## Commentary...

Bob Hicks, Editor

As I was wrapping up this January issue at Thanksgiving time a revelatory email about our website (unchanged since it was setup about 2009) turned up, explaining to me in detail why I am “losing a lot of potential leads...” It struck me as something I would like to share with all of you, so here goes, accompanied by any rebuttals I chose to make:

“Hello Messingaboutinboats.com Team, hope you are doing well! I thought you might like to know some reasons why Messingaboutinboats.com is not getting enough Social Media and Organic Search Engine Traffic. I am a SEO Expert (Google Certified) working with a leading SEO service provider.”

*Ed Comments:* Sadly I have no idea what a SEO service provider is and also I cannot visualize what this Social Media and Organic Search Engine Traffic might be.

“As per my analysis and research, Messingaboutinboats.com is not performing well in the Google Search and for which you are losing a lot of potential leads from Messingaboutinboats.com. Some of the aspects for low traffic for Messingaboutinboats.com is given below:

Due to Low Quality Back Links. Not featuring at first page of Google, Yahoo or Bing. Errors in the coding part of Messingaboutinboats.com. Low Quality contents of Messingaboutinboats.com. Google Penguin 3.0 effect on Messingaboutinboats.com.

*Ed Comments:* Well, this is just inexcusable! Baffling, too. What are “Low Quality Back Links? How come I don’t know anything about that “first page of Google, Yahoo or Bing?” What errors have we made in coding? What coding? I was especially struck by the “Low Quality contents...” I guess we just don’t measure up on the quality scale used by an SEO provider? And what effect does a Google Penguin have on us? A Penguin?

“Our Solution for Messingaboutinboats.com:

We will give you 1st page ranking on Google, Yahoo and Bing. Improve your sales and brand value with our online reputation management. 100% satisfaction guarantee or your full money back. Google updates secure or recover. Increase your traffic flow. HTML5 or Mobile Responsive Design for Messingaboutinboats.com.”

*Ed Comments:* Quite a fix up list. Cool that they will give us 1st page ranking. No details on how they will “improve our sales and brand value and online reputation (whazzat?) management,” no mention on how much that “full money back” is should they fail to measure up to their claims. What are these Google updates? Traffic flow (we get

this). HTML5 or Mobile Responsive Design? Whazzat? Sounds suspiciously like baffle-gab to us).

“We will be optimizing Messingaboutinboats.com in the major search engines like: Google, Yahoo & Bing which results in improvements in keyword ranking, traffic, link popularity, goal conversion and ROI in the first month of our work.”

*Ed Comments:* Lots promised here: Ranking our keyboard? Keyboards have rankings? Popularizing our link? What link? Converting our goal? They know our goal already? ROI? Whazzat?

“A HTML5 mobile responsive Messingaboutinboats.com can get 50% increased traffic flow and our process can help achieve it. As a Responsive Design make your site more accessible to mobile phone, tablets, desktop etc. According to ‘Matt Cutts: Google Mobile Queries May Surpass PC Search This Year’.”

*Ed Comments:* Aha, PC Search eh? We use a Mac. Now what?

“Sound interesting? Feel free to email us or alternatively you can provide me with your phone number and the best time to call you to have a fruitful discussion.

Carmen, Integrated Marketing Expert”

*Ed Comments:* That would be some “fruitful discussion” between this IME (whose English reproduced here verbatim suggests he/she lives far, far away overseas somewhere) and your Editor, who likes the comfortable, easygoing pace of print media. Attempting to converse with one of “today’s people” in “today’s jargon” with its bastardized English, abundant acronyms and sound bite (byte?) high speed delivery would be an utter failure.

Today’s marketing people fail to realize that we are not interested in “selling” the magazine, we just want to inform any possibly interested people of what we have to share with them. No discount rates on subscriptions, no gift enticements to subscribe. That sort of circulation building is to increase a readership base in order to justify/jack up ad rates. We value our loyal advertisers and welcome new ones who might find us of interest but our underlying financial base is reader subscriptions. Anyone who subscribes should do so because they want to enjoy our content.

Our website certainly isn’t a hustle. It contains all necessary up to date information on how to subscribe and offers a free sample copy for the asking. A 1997 *Boston Globe* article stated, “in this age of the internet superhighway, *Messing About in Boats* is a dirt road connecting those who have an infatuation with small boats.” We still are, and are unlikely to consider paving our way.

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## On the Cover...

Utah’s much reduced in scale Great Salt Lake has its charms (such as the “tufa knobs” pictured on our cover) according to reader Kyle Williams, who tells us all about his sailing adventure there in “A Baja/Utah Sailing Adventure” on pages 16-19 in this issue.



Lawrence Brook is tributary which joins Tully Brook just downstream from the launch site. Just ahead of me are the rocks at the foot of quite spectacular Doanes' Falls. Above the falls Lawrence Brook is navigable for a couple of miles for those who can portage in to a launch site and over the beaver dams in the marshy area through which is teanders.



At the far end of Long Lake Charlie enters the marsh looking for the main channel, it moves around from year to year.



Tully Brook offers more promising paddling for us as we head north.

We've watched this gnarled old tree battling the elements over the years, gradually losing its limbs and now trunks to the wintry blasts that must lean on it over the frozen marshes where it still stands defiantly.



## Tully

By Bob Hicks

Charlie and I wrapped up our 2014 paddling season in late October at a favorite escape from civilization location, Tully Brook near Athol, Massachusetts. Backed up by a Corps of Engineers' flood control dam which forms Tully Lake, the brook is actually a small river which can be paddled upstream from a launch site, where the brook departs from the lake, about three miles to a head of navigation determined by beaver dams and one's ability to surmount them. In our case the first one is it, as Charlie cannot get out of his kayak nor can I do so and drag him over it. This always occurs after transiting a wide place in the brook called Long Lake and entering an extensive marshland through which the brook meanders and where the beavers build.

The special charm of this location is that its shorelines are devoid of human activity being all flood control and conservation land remote enough for busy highways to eliminate the ever present traffic noise afflicting our more suburban river choices in eastern Massachusetts.



Head of navigation for us, this beaver dam doesn't look like much but we cannot drag our kayaks over even so modest a beaver effort. Getting out onto it from my kayak would be a tricky balance and footing act for me and then I couldn't drag Charlie's kayak over it with him in it anyway, so, lunch time!

An unexpected tenant in this wood duck house appeared in its doorway when I paddled up to take the picture, it was a fisher, and swiftly departed the scene down into the adjacent marsh.



*Messing About in Boats, January 2015 – 3*

For over two decades I've suffered from what I diagnosed as Sailboat Fever. It's a relapsing fever like malaria and hits me every two to three years, then lasts several months. During those months I feverishly purchase and read innumerable books on sailing and various sailboats. I obsess over which boat would best suit me and then come perilously close to a purchase. Until recently the fever would subside before any purchase.

How did I catch this particular fever? Who knows, a brief sail during childhood, crewing during college, intermittent sails since and a couple of courses for certifications, even looking over a couple of boats for sale. However, most readers probably wonder why didn't I completely succumb to the fever and let possession take me. Well, it's not that I'm barren of boats. Two sea kayaks, a touring kayak and a whitewater canoe hang on my living room walls.

And at a small lake where I often paddle I watched two fellows launch a catamaran. In the time it took to rig the boat, back the trailer down the ramp and launch the catamaran I could have been off on a paddle and returned. Any potential sailboat purchase always got stuck in irons against that maxim, "A boat will be used to the extent it's easy to get it in and out of the water." Hefting a kayak or canoe, even at 65lbs, onto my car's roof seemed a lot simpler than dealing with a trailer much less the rigging and additional gear.

Interestingly, with each bout of fever over the years the boat upon which I fixated grew incrementally smaller. 22' became 17', then 15' until finally just under 12'. And the weight dropped from 2000lbs to just over 500lbs. That certainly pleased my car as well



## Slouching Toward A Sailboat A Snail's Tale

as my wallet, which didn't want to spring for a larger vehicle. This progression in thinking seemed to parallel a trend I observed in true blue sailors. With age, the general shift was from larger to smaller boats. I might fault myself for failing to "do it now" 20 some years ago. But I also realize that doing it then might have entailed owning then selling a series of sailboats. That's another trend I've observed in long term, actual sailors. I've certainly experienced that with a series of canoes. And with kayaks I've only reached steady state by owning three. So waiting did have an advantage and there's been the consolation of paddle if not of wind.

All this brings to mind a very asocial character who lived far up a mountain canyon where no one could disturb his solitude. One day this hermit was surprised and annoyed to hear knocking at his door. He opened the door,

looked out and saw no one. Then he looked down and saw a small snail eagerly gazing up. "Hrrumph," the hermit muttered as he bent over, picked up the snail and chucked it as far down the canyon as he could. He never heard another knock until two years later. Again he opened his door and again saw no one. Then he looked down where a little snail looked up and asked, "Why did you do that?"

Sometimes that's how it is with life's mysteries. This time my sailboat fever finally broke with a down payment on a 12' micro-mini cruiser. I can hear that little snail asking, "Why did you do that?" I don't know buddy, but the trick now will be to keep this particular fever alive and burning until the boat's arrival. That shouldn't be too hard with 20 years worth of books, some ripe for re-reading, plus many more on the horizon.

But I'll sort of miss that relapsing fever, those passionate sweats and chills when practicality wrestled temptation until the latter gave way and the fever broke. Rest assured, where there's a temptress, there's a fever. In my case it's the siren's call of traditional lookers like the Falmouth Cutter 22. Inland where I live I need an offshore keelboat like I need a semi to run errands around town. That's OK. I can tie myself to the mast like Ulysses and trust my canine first mate to keep us well in toward shore, close to sand and sanity. That's the only way to safely enjoy certain fevers, that plus a mantra like, "It's the sailing, stupid. It's the sailing." And regarding those fulsome ocean going lovelies it helps to recall another tale:

Dennis the Menace listened as his father read from a book of fairy tales. "So," Dennis concluded, "did he marry the princess or did he live happily ever after?"



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## From the Journals of Constant Waterman



By Matthew Goldman  
Constantwaterman.com

When I arose, at daybreak, it was twenty-two degrees. I snuggled up to my mug of strong, dark French roast and clicked on the weather channel.

"Cold today," it admonished. "Maybe colder." By eight o'clock it had surged to twenty-four, the high for the day. I accountably grew affectionate towards the wood stove. My crew called up, as promised, at nine o'clock.

"Ready to sail?" she chortled.

I put on both my union suits, three pair of wool socks, two watch caps, and my mittens. I took my cell phone and started out the door.

"Don't you plan to finish dressing?" my observant wife enquired.

Eventually, I clambered into my truck. Then I practiced skidding about on that pond I call my driveway. Did I mention we had an ice storm night before last? It began as snow but considerably converted into sleet. In the morning, we had an inch of glaze that would grace a wedding cake. Although I chopped away enough ice to allow us both to make it into work, I thoughtfully left enough behind to propitiate the gods. This morning I slid sideways into the road, executed a seven-twenty, and set a course for the boatyard.

I hadn't had time enough yesterday to spare a thought for *Moon-Wind*. This morning I found her liberally sheathed in ice. The tarpaulin I'd bought two months ago to drape her boom remained below in the V-berth, neatly folded. I leapt up on deck, executed a pretty slalom around the standing rigging, slid across the hatch on my starboard ear, and tumbled into the cockpit. The tiller went up one sleeve and came out the other. I strapped on my crampons, grabbed my ice ax, and

assaulted the wolves of winter. By the time my crew appeared, I had freed the main hatch enough to remove the drop boards.

"Isn't it lovely today?" she said.

"Yes," I replied, heaving a chunk of crusty ice overboard. "When do we get our share of global warming?"

"But the sun is shining," she said. "And the clouds are fluffy white lambs, and all of West Cove is filled with little ripples." She peered beyond the breakwater. "Well, little whitecaps, anyway."

"Here are some lobsterman's rubber gloves and a rubber mallet," I growled. "Pipe down and break some ice." After an hour, we had the boat half clear. But the nonskid was anything but. And the powdery ice left behind might have been marbles. Any spray we shipped today would form a glaze on deck. Sliding about on a pitching boat would soon cease to amuse. Besides, I hadn't a cooking pot large enough to poach the whole main sheet.

"We aren't going out," I informed my crew. "The Chamber of Commerce doesn't recommend swimming in December."

"How stodgy of them," she said.

We draped my tarpaulin over the boom, over the lifelines, and secured it to the bases of the stanchions with foot-long pendants. Tying knots in little pieces of line requires fingers. I worked without my gloves for half an hour. Of course, I needed to clear loose ice around each stanchion base. After I'd put the second half hitch in my little finger, I knew it was time for a break.

There weren't enough stanchion bases for all the grommets. I thawed out my best red pencil to revise my thinking. I found two lengths of seven-sixteenths braid in my cockpit locker. On either side, I secured an end to the base of a stanchion forward of the mast and streamed the line aft, threading it through both loops of each stanchion base. Then I belayed the end to a cleat on my coaming. Now I had something continuous to which to fasten my pendants. To avoid abrading the canvas, I padded the tops of my stanchions with strips of carpet, folded over and seized with rigging tape. I now had a tent that came nearly to the deck. It was cozy inside: light and windless and, comparatively, warm. I managed to pull on my gloves with only my teeth.

We walked up the hill to Carson's. The midday sun was bright; the wind was cool; the flush of vigorous health adorned our cheeks. We hung our coats on the floor and sat at the counter. I straightened each finger tentatively until I could ease off my gloves. The waitress gave me a cheery smile.

"Isn't it lovely today?" she said. "The sun is shining and the clouds are fluffy white lambs, and..."

"Pipe down, lass," I growled, "and pour the coffee."





# You write to us about...


## Activities & Events...

### Free Fridays in February at CBMM

The Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum is offering free admission on Fridays during the month of February. Admission includes access to the 1879 Hooper Strait Lighthouse and other historic structures as well as several exhibition buildings along CBMM's 18 acre Miles River waterfront campus in St Michaels. Winter offers a great time to visit the museum, there are a number of inside exhibits to enjoy and our boatyard is busiest in the colder months with restoration work on our historic fleet of Chesapeake vessels. With a mission to preserve and explore the history, environment and people of the Chesapeake Bay, the museum is open 10am to 4pm seven days a week. For more information visit [www.cbmm.org](http://www.cbmm.org) or call (410) 745-2916.

### Georgetown Wooden Boat Show

TWENTY-FIFTH ANNUAL  
**WOODEN BOAT SHOW**



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SOUTH CAROLINA

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AT FRONT AND BROAD STREETS

[WWW.WOODENBOATSHOW.COM](http://WWW.WOODENBOATSHOW.COM)

The Georgetown (South Carolina) Wooden Boat Show in October was a great show. There were 115 boats displayed in 16 classes plus a number of commercial and educational exhibits.

The show organizer, the South Carolina Maritime Museum, is now in its 18th year and here is what they have to say about themselves:

"In 1996 the Georgetown Harbor Historical Association launched a dream to create a museum that would celebrate the rich maritime history of South Carolina and the Port of Georgetown, the state's second largest seaport.

Now, with the acquisition of our

own facility, the South Carolina Maritime Museum has opened in its permanent home on the waterfront at the corner of Front and Broad Streets in Georgetown.

Georgetown is home to South Carolina's oldest operating lighthouse which was built in 1811. Through the efforts of the South Carolina Maritime Museum and the US Coast guard, her Fresnel lens has been returned to Georgetown from a USCG facility in Miami, Florida. This 5th order Fresnel lens, which guided ships from the Atlantic Ocean into Winyah Bay for over 100 years, is the SCMM's most significant acquisition to date and the centerpiece of our exhibits.



For more information please contact Museum Director Melissa Small at [info@sc-mm.org](mailto:info@sc-mm.org).

Bob Dalley, Lake Junaluska, NC

## Information of Interest...

### Winter Comes to Lake Union

As the November days grow shorter here on Lake Union in Seattle, the boats are still afloat. Yachts are going to the U Washington football games, there are floats on the east side of the field. The U Washington and Seattle Pacific U are still working their shells at 6-7am and 6-7pm. The Asian dragon boats are working out on weekends, as are the polynesian outrigger canoes along with our CWB umiaqs and carved cedar canoes. Our other programs at CWB are going strong for kids an adults out on the water or in the boat shops.

Dick Wagner, Center for Wooden Boats, Seattle, WA

## Opinions...

### In Praise of Rowing Rear View Mirrors

While slouching through the November 2014 issue the "Tribes" essay by Billy Ruffian caught my eye. First off I'd like to commend Mr Ruffian on a masterfully constructed essay and encourage him to continue his contribution. Travelogues and instructional are fine, but ever since Robb White set sail for the distant shore, *MAIB* has been deficient on the intellectual side (your editorials excluded of course, as good as they are they can't carry the day on their own). RW's essays were of a particular style, wise cracking, back handed sniping hurled gleefully at targets well worthy of it. Mr Ruffian's style is different from that, much more introspective, but no less engaging for that.

As both a rower and paddler, I took keen interest in Mr Ruffian's musings regarding the mental aspects of rowers versus paddlers. One particularly poetic line caught my eye, "The paddler owns what's in front, the rower what's behind." This got me wondering about how many other rowers have managed to bridge this substantial philosophical gap by utilizing a rear view mirror. I've used one for years and have become so accustomed to it that I couldn't imagine life without one.

I'm talking about the type that clips onto my glasses (or for those cursed by 20/20 vision, some alternative type of noggin based mounting) and presents the mirror close enough to the eyeball such that it occupies a significant portion of the field of view, presenting in turn a correspondingly substantial field of view to the rear (or forward if we are talking nautical-like). Any other arrangement, such as something mounted on the gunwale, is useless. And don't skimp. I'm talking about a quality device fabricated with stainless or brass wire mountings, and real glass for the mirror, not some crappy plastic Chinese slave labor piece of junk. Check out the made in the USA "Take-A-Look" product at REI. That's what I use. Not that I'm plugging for REI, mind you. Or America, for that matter. This is a non commercial/non nationalistic platform.

On a bicycle the mirror is all that is needed. On a rowboat there's one other bit that's required for the mirror to serve well. There must be a vertical element of some sort, fixed on the bow, that rises above the horizon into the field of view. Once that is effected, the vertical combines with the horizon to form in the mirror a virtual crosshair, such that it can be used as a target style sight for the destination, accurate to within a couple of fractions of an inch or so. On my rowboat (the *Vodex Vextok*) in calm weather I can cleave the floats of the crab pots in the creek without once having to turn my head.

I can hear the purists and close minded folks already poooh pooohing the idea, complaining about how a mirror so close to one eye is going to destroy the natural field of view and create a massive blind spot that will be both a danger and constant annoyance.

As to danger, considering that when moving forward, there's no more danger

in having a blind spot aft as there is in the alternative of the normal mirrorless rowing experience, where there is a 180° blind spot forward. What little danger there may be is overcome by adopting the habit of an occasional turn of the head about 45° in either direction. Combined with the rear view, this comfortable motion sweeps a full 360° visual field, allowing picking up moving hazards (would the example of a miserable, insufferable, filthy jet ski operated by an irresponsible buffoon reveal too much of my own tribal attitudes?) that might otherwise be missed through even the most strenuous sans mirror neck stretching.

As far as the annoyance, I, too, found this to be true, but only initially. But two phenomenon work to overcome this pretty quickly. First, there already are blind spots in each eye (formed by the lack of receptors where the retina joins the optic nerve, oh, just google it!) to which we are already so accustomed that they can't even be perceived without a formal test. The blind spot created by the mirror (which, in fact, is not really a blind spot at all but rather a new sight spot or vision port) is soon completely ignored by our mental apparatus, no less so than our natural blind spots.

Secondly, in the same way our visual apparatus melds the two individual fields presented by our eyeballs into a single, stereoscopic image, that same apparatus quickly learns to integrate that new vision port into our perception so wholly and completely that the mirror simply disappears from view altogether. It's true I tell you. The visual image it presents becomes no more distinguishable than the individual vision out of each eyeball. And in the same way that we can turn one eye on and off by closing its lid, we can turn the mirror on and off by simple mental switching. For those having never experienced it, it's as close as we can get to having a real eyeball in the back of our head.

As William Catton noted in "Over-shoot," the term "prosthetic eyeball" would be much more apt a description of what the rear view mirror does for me. It is so convenient and useful that I have even taken to wearing my rear view mirror when paddling my kayak (also named *Vodex Vextok*, all my boats are named *Vodex Vextok*) as an added safety measure. In short, I have melded the two separate and distinct mentalities of paddling and rowing into one single, integrated form of perception. What shall this state be called? Raddling? Row-dling? Padowing? Padrowing?

So, for those readers who have made it down to this point in the correspondence without flinging the entire magazine away in disgust over this ridiculous letter and are looking to likewise bridge that mental gulf between rowing and paddling, consider the rear view mirror. It may even inspire you to epic poetry of the sort below, extracted from Byron<sup>2</sup>:

There's nothing more dearer,  
Than my rear view mirror.  
Though you might think it queerer,  
It makes everything clearer.  
All appears nearer,  
And I'm never the wearier,  
Why, my day is more cheerier,  
With my grand rear view mirror!

<sup>1</sup>Or consider using DuckDuckGo, a search engine which neither filters, bubbles, or tracks you and which is substantially less integrated into the surveillance state

machinery than Google, an organization so detestable that it does not even deserve proper capitalization.

<sup>2</sup>No, not really. I wrote it. Please send all hate mail c/o Bob Hicks @ *Messing About*.  
Brian Salzano, Patchogue, NY

### That Downward Spiral

Here's a communication between two crazy guys and an up and coming crazy guy, Fland Sharp, about the downward spiral of "fixing up old boats." Let this be a lesson to all of the rest of you guys, they're easy to get but impossible to get rid of.

#### From Fland

"Dave, I had a call from a college friend of mine in Gainesville to come down and look at a sailboat he found in the back of a property he bought a few weeks ago and needs to get rid of. He said it looked as if it had been in the weeds for 20 years and I told him he would probably have to remove it with a chain saw.

Turned out to be a fiberglass catboat of 18' or so and, after hacking away the bushes, it looks pretty good. The builder's plate was hard to read but it was built in S Dartmouth, Massachusetts. My friend has not been given the keys to the house yet but he remembers seeing some round aluminum tubes and what looked like a ship's rudder in the garage.

I'm going back down next week and sort everything out. He may not need that chainsaw. Just what I need, another boat."

#### Dave Replies

"For god's sake, Fland, don't do it. You're starting down the devil's path to being like a crazy cat lady except with boats. Just look at me and Washington Dan."

#### Washington Dan Chimes In

"Dave told me he had taken The Pledge. He claimed to be down to only one boat. *Helen Marie*. And little *Laylah*, of course. But that one really didn't count because it's the best melon ever invented and more a museum piece than an actual boat. And that Core Sound boat. But that one was new and shouldn't really count yet either. And that kayak shaped drink holder. But that was just a scientific experiment and you really can't count those. Because, well, it's science, you see. So you really should listen to your buddy, Dave. You can really believe him. He's seen the light and chosen the narrow path to Redemption, unlike the rest of us, er, weaklings of no character. Listen to Dave, he's learned how to resist such evil temptation. Listen to Dave. He'll tell ya. Just say "No."

#### And Now from Fland

"Damn, too late! I sent my email to Dave three weeks ago but apparently didn't successfully send it. If I had only had your sage council then I might have been saved.

The catboat turns out to be in great shape after shoveling all leaves and pine needles out of it. There doesn't seem to be any rot in the bulkhead or the cockpit and no soft spots in the deck. We think we found all the parts in the old garage and are putting her back together. I have her on a flatbed now but I'm working on a real trailer. The round aluminum mast has a tabernacle. I couldn't believe it when we dragged it out. Never seen an arrangement like it."

Dave Lucas, Bradenton, FL

## Projects...

Mary Jane



Here is my latest project, a Bob Steward design. I've already acquired a nice Volvo twin gas motor for it and some planking. It's being strip planked.

Steve Marsh, Elyria, OH

## This Magazine...

### Very Much Enjoyed

Please find enclosed a check for the renewal of my subscription for *Messing About in Boats*. I very much enjoy your efforts to bring such a publication to our doors.

Seth Miller, Minnetonka, MN



## MYSTIC RIVER

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## Foreword

*A Legacy of Small Craft* is the story of a man's life as seen through the eyes of a woman who loved and admired him. The man is Robert H. Baker (1927-1983), known to most as "Bob", the woman is Anne W. Baker (1929-2011), known to most as "Pete," but called "Petey" only by her closest friends. I am their youngest child, Sarah; and it falls to me to share this story with you.

This story was meant to be told, but it was a long time forming. Shortly after my father's death in 1983, my mother made her first attempt at a book, but she was not ready to write this story and put the project aside. For years she would tackle some bit of the account, producing several articles about boats and eventually a book about herself, *Collecting Houses*.

Then, in 2010, after years of starting and stopping, she began pulling the layers together and the story came to life. When she died unexpectedly in 2011, the manuscript was mostly finished and with the invaluable help of close family friends, her story of my father can now be told.

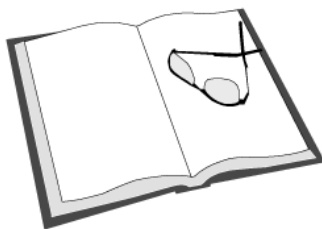
On the surface one might categorize my mother as old buildings; houses, mills, barns, etc. and my father as traditional working craft, the workingman's boat. But like everyone, there were other layers for each. At his core, Dad was a time, an understanding, a way of seeing that is being lost in these days of technology. How he would have handled computers and cell phones, I can't begin to image. My mother embraced technology and used it, at least if it proved useful to her goals, such as writing this book, scanning negatives and pictures, using email, and the Internet.

After my mother's death, I discovered my parents in a totally new way through looking at their papers, the books in their library, the possessions collected over their lifetimes that not only decorated the house, but filled workshops and storage buildings, and in the people whom they called friends.

My mother was a truly amazing individual. I have always been aware that she taught herself everything she knew about anything. She did not go to college or attend trade school. She read books, attended seminars, and went out and did things. She taught herself well and became a recognized authority on old buildings, the maker of highly sought-after pottery, the creator of extensive gardens, and an accomplished writer, to name just a few of her talents.

While I was preparing her personal collections to be archived, I discovered that she kept detailed notes about every project she undertook. While I would not call her an affectionate mother, her manner of teaching was in line with her personal style of learning: get the tools and teach yourself from books or by looking at examples. I learned much from her that has helped, in part, to form the strong woman I have become, unafraid of a challenge.

My father, by contrast, was very affectionate with me as well as with his other children and the children of friends and family. If you wanted to learn something he knew, he was there to teach you. While I learned about

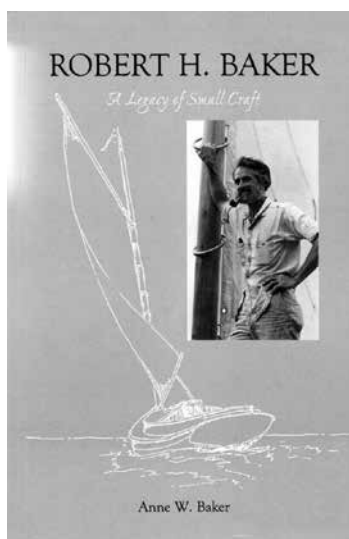


## Book Reviews

### Robert H. Baker *A Legacy of Small Craft*

By Anne W. Baker  
6"x9" Black & White on White Paper  
230 Pages – \$21.95  
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Reviewed by Bob Hicks



## Reviewer Comments

This book is a marvelous read about Bob Baker, a man who lived his life with small boats, a life tragically shortened at age 56 by a fatal brain tumor. Based on her life with him and drawing on his collected work, his wife Anne "Pete" Baker has written a wonderfully evocative collection of 31 essays and supplemented it with a 24 page appendix showing many of his early designs and illustrations. A second appendix offers Bob's high school graduation theses, "The Principles of Marine Architecture, One of the Oldest Sciences."

I leave it to Bob's daughter Sarah, who brought the book to fruition after the death of the author, her mother, to tell you the why and how of the book appearing 30 years after Bob's passing in her "Foreword" and to one of Pete's essays, "Warren" and the "Epilog," to illustrate what you'll be enjoying. For my part, three pages following this review reprint my articles about Bob from the early years of *MAIB*.

"learning" from my mother, I learned about "how" from my father, how to hold and use a tool most effectively without cutting yourself, to use the right tool for the job, to use wood on wood, metal on metal, and techniques of construction.

I was seventeen when he passed away, so there was a lot I never had a chance to learn well, but Dad left me with a foundation of skills and memories of his teachings that guide me in everything. I learned some of the most important lessons which I carry today, such as: "If you're going to take time to do it, take time to do it right" or "Always leave it cleaner than you found it, especially when you are working in someone else's space."

I recall times when Dad would be busy working on a boat in his shop but he would always make a space for me to watch, to help (as only a wide-eyed five year old can), to ask a question, or to get guidance on some project. Or there were the times when one of us might mention wanting to go rowing; work would temporarily stop, a small dinghy was launched outside the shop, a "recovery line was securely attached to boat and land, a life jacket was produced for the rower (and any interested passengers) to don, a helping hand enabled all to get aboard, a few words of instruction were offered and you were released from the hold of land, off to play in worlds of your imagination, to figure out your frustrations and triumphs, and to be rescued should you just call out.

Through preparing this book for printing I have learned that boats were part of who my father was from a very young age, but I knew him as also loving old cars, old trains, steam engines, old buildings, and photography. I remember him as an outwardly quiet man but as I think of the "adventures" he took me on, I recall how his deep passions expressed themselves. More than once we entered a "closed" boatyard, tromped through fields or over marshes or mashed weeds out of the way behind someone's barn, all in the quest of the next boat.

When not out looking for boats, we'd explore along the edges of Edaville Railroad in Carver, Massachusetts, looking for abandoned train cars, and through old train yards throughout New England. We'd be off climbing on old tractors long forgotten in a field or in the corner of some old barn. On a rainy day, or when there was not any work needing to be done, Dad might pull out a miniature steam engine and get it running again, or maybe he would work on the set-up for his small-gauge trains. When it wasn't boats, trains, or steam engines, it might be cars or photography.

These were my parents. This was my childhood. It was not about nine-to-five hours or "normal" work-a-day activities or typical gender roles. It was about passions interests, and getting the job done well, correctly and on time when possible. It was about respecting the wood, the tools, and the heritage. The Quakers have a saying: Let your life speak. Dad was a quiet, humble man. Let these pages tell his story through the eyes of my mother.

Sarah H. Baker

## Warren

Tied up again in Newport, we knew we needed a land base of our own, away from commercial wharfage with its rules and regulations and from the spectators who sucked away our privacy. Bob heard about an old oyster building built on a wharf in Warren, Rhode Island, that was for sale.

The wharf and pilings were secure enough to tie *Kalmia* to. The building was three stories high, with three large first-floor rooms, one of them ideal for restoring boats, another I could use for repairing old house woodwork and the other a safe place for Ben and Sarah to play. On the west side was a small lean-to that was perfect for Bob's office. The second floor had a two-bedroom rentable apartment and there was a full attic. The place even had enough land on the east end for a kitchen garden. We bought it.

Now that Bob had a good-sized space in which to design, restore and build boats, he moved his tools in. Bob loved tools. Whatever he did, how he did it was just as important as getting it done. A tool for him was an extension of his hands, with the resulting work flowing directly from his mind. Everything was hand-planed, hand-cut, hand-drilled. The only tool that used electricity was a huge cast-iron bandsaw that was older than Bob by fifty years. Bob's tools were so precious to him that you could feel his eyes on your back if you were using one, and once when I made the mistake of setting a plane down on its sole...well, you can imagine.

Next, he organized his office: shelves for his books; filing cabinets for his collection of photographs, research and letters; a drafting table; and a rug on the floor to keep his feet warm. When designing, Bob used a ruling pen; a stick with a nib on the end. He had infinite patience; one nib full of ink didn't last very long before he would have to dip again into the ink. After the pen was filled, he'd jerk it a few times towards the floor to get the amount of ink just right and that's how the new rug under his feet slowly changed to oriental.

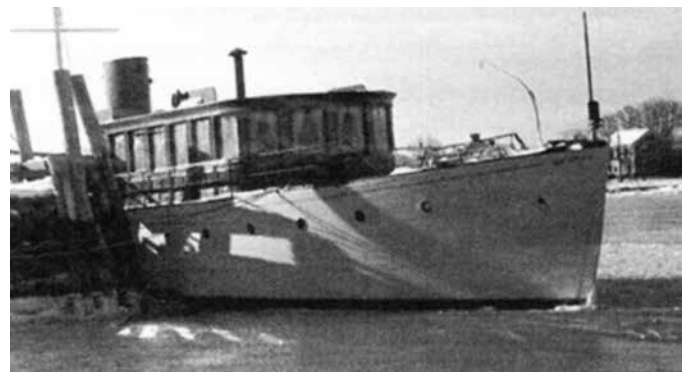
Many people were in need of Bob's skills and it wasn't long before boats were lined up in the water next to our shop.

Our commitment to stay here would mean *Kalmia*'s restored exterior would be subjected to harsh winter weather. We shivered when looking at *Kalmia*, a beautiful piece of furniture being attacked by frigid winter wind and snow with ice crashing against her coppered waterline. This kept Bob awake with worry.

When all our nine children were with us...our two, my five and Bob's two sons Stephen and Jeremy from his first marriage (who visited from England) life aboard was chaotic. They loved it, of course, but dealing with nine children surrounded by water instead of land meant life jackets and a constant head count.

And in the winter it was treacherous carrying one child and leading the others across slippery decks to reach their staterooms below, especially when finding the hatch frozen closed. We had become slaves to the yacht we had recreated and it soon became obvious that we needed to think how *Kalmia* would fit out future.

After two more winters we put *Kalmia* up for sale. Bob was suspicious of every potential buyer, particularly if the woman was wearing high-heeled shoes. When one couple was discussing how to modernize *Kalmia*'s interior he quickly ushered them down the gangplank. After six potential buyers had been "gangplanked", David Montgomery and his wife appeared. They loved their boat for what it was and in 1967 became her new owners. With *Kalmia* gone we moved into the apartment above the shop that we had previously rented out. Visiting the Montgomerys a year later, we were delighted to see that nothing had changed. The varnish glowed, the same sage green curtains hung in the saloon and there were fresh apples on the table.



## Epilog

This book covers only a part of Bob's life work. In addition, there were tugs, steam packets, oyster boats, scow schooners, duck boats, crab boats, bugeyes, cats, dories, smacks, sloops, fellucas, ferries and notebooks full of lines he'd taken but hadn't had time to draw on paper. Bob was especially looking forward to a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts that would give him the opportunity to document the sailing workboats of this country.

Without Bob's vision, without the hours spent in boatyards... New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Maine, California and in between...searching for our maritime past, how little would we know about the history of small craft, about boats married to the sea and the sky?

Every deserving boat he discovered was surveyed visually, photographed, measured and often brought home to join others in the backyard.

After Bob died, I tried to keep the boat shop open with the help of Julia Ferguson, who had been working recently with Bob. But the shop was something much deeper than a boat on its molds and the smell of cedar. It was Bob. Why was this? I think he answered this himself when he wrote: "All things are, because they developed from a need. The need creates a mold, a parent. To preserve this mold is all-important. The preservation of a life style follows. We only look back in order to go ahead when we understand the birth of the idea."

He was a man more interested in the journey than the goals.

# PLANS

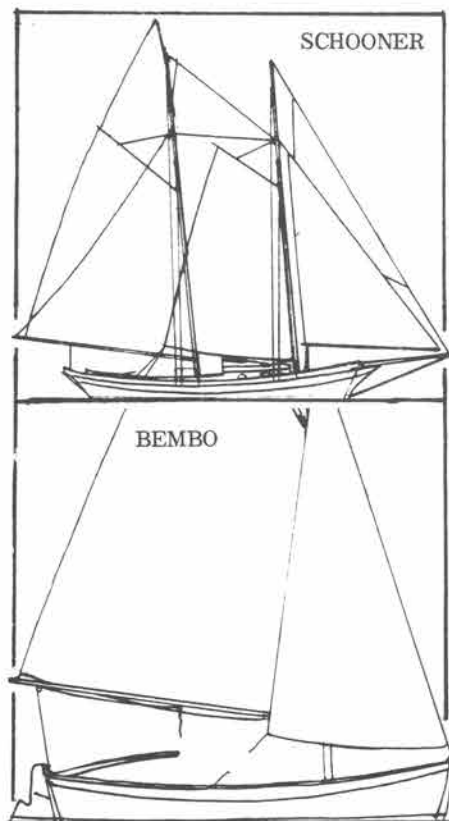
## November 2014 Update

Plans are still available through Mystic Seaport and most of Bob Baker's papers and photos are at Mystic as well (available to be viewed at the collections library by anyone interested). The full list of Baker Boat Works plans is available through Mystic Collections. As they are still getting the website updated the best contact is to email Paul O'Pecko at paul.opeco@mysticseaport.org and ask for the Mystic plan number giving him the Baker Boat Works plan number and any related information available.

A list of available plans can also be found at: <http://www.by-the-sea.com/bakerboatworks/>, click on Plans List. And I can be emailed at RHBakerCatalog@gmail.com where brother Stephen or I will try to answer questions.

Sarah Baker

## 29 Years Ago in **MAIB**



Report by Bob Hicks

## BAKER BOAT WORKS

### *Carrying on the Tradition*



Julia Ferguson rows one of Bob's pulling boats.

I met the late Bob Baker only once on a visit to Baker Boat Works down in Westport, MA with friend Ron Ginger. Ron was interested in Bob's plans for SAMANTHA, a lovely 27 foot schooner he designed in 1963, one later built by builder Sam Guild of Maine. I had seen that boat at Christmas Cove at a TSCA small craft meet, and it was so perfectly proportioned that out on a mooring it appeared to be a much larger craft than 27 feet. Ron had sailed over to the Cove on her with the Guild's and had fallen in love with the boat.

It developed that at that time the plans for SAMANTHA were simply lines and offsets, the construction details. Bob had left to the builder. We sat in Baker's old house on the Boat Works property and talked a while. Within another year Bob Baker met an untimely death from a brain tumor. Since 1944 he had been creating his elegant, classic designs, mostly small craft, and for many years he had done many restorations of older classics.

Baker Boat Works carries on with Bob's widow, "Pete", her son and a daughter, and Bob's most recent protege, Julia Ferguson, building to order small craft, restoring older boats, and organizing Bob's files of plans into a systematic collection that could be made available to builders. This past winter I visited the shop again to see how this was all progressing. Pete and her crew had been exhibiting at the Wooden Boat Show where a special award had been presented

to them in recognition of Bob's bygone efforts at restorations of valued classic old motor yachts by the Antique & Classic Boat Society.

The sign once painted on the roof of one of the buildings in the complex, which was once a farm, was gone. On my earlier visit this sign had proclaimed the place as the "Dilettante Boat Works" in honor of a local zoning battle. When Bob first moved to the location, it was not zoned for a boatyard type of business and he had to go before the local zoning board to obtain a special variance. One opponent was a woman who daily drove by and she expressed her opposition in one way by stating that Baker and his crew were, "just a bunch of dilettantes anyway." So Bob painted the sign on the roof. Obviously, he got the special variance, along with his revenge.

Inside the building shed this winter, one of those old frame farm buildings with lots of windows on the south and west, and a wood stove at the northern end, one of Bob's sailing dinghy designs, BEMBO, was on the building molds. Julia was at work, she is the boatbuilder now. She came to Baker's several years ago from the New Bedford technical high school where she had learned boat repair (fishing boat style) to take the place of a departing "apprentice". Bob taught her his ideas, methods and ways, and after he died, Pete asked her to stay on and carry on with the building work.

BEMBO was named for Bob's youngest son by a former marriage, but later

he changed the name to the North Shore Dinghy as a firm by that name undertook to build some in Maine. This is a nicely turned out 11 foot rowing and sailing dinghy, and one man who built one a number of years ago is yacht broker Bill Page of Camden, ME. Bill had this to say in a recent letter to Pete when he learned that they were to again undertake to build the boat:

"NELLIE (Bill's boat) is the ONE boat in which I would change absolutely nothing if I were to build her again, and would not part with her at any price. Bob did an absolutely outstanding job when designing her. I was delighted to hear that you are going to build her and I wish you the best of luck. Many people have inquired concerning the origin of NELLIE and I refer all inquiries to you."

When Bob's tumor became obvious as a terminal illness, he and Pete began to get his thoughts about all of his designs down on tape for a future book, since he had never gotten around to assembling this information in any formal way. They reviewed his plans from day to day, Pete asking him to explain his thinking and ideas, recording his responses on tape for future editing and publication (now in a long process). The discussion on BEMBO was as follows:

"Is this BEMBO?"

"Yes."

"Is this boat designed from a traditional idea or is it completely your own design?"

"It is mostly my own work but I suppose the Bahamian dinghy scared me a little bit."

"What influence did the Bahamian dinghy have on this design?"

"Mostly the shape of her transom and the shape of her bow. We were down there when I did her. Those damn little boats were all over the place."

"Was the shape of her transom or the shape of her bow something you felt was significant for the shape of a boat?"

"Well, I think to a certain extent. They were beautiful."

"Did you feel that she would fit in these waters?"

"Well, I thought the shape of the bow and the shape of the stern would fit in any of these waters."

"So, you feel it was successful?"

"I certainly do. I think she is one damn fine boat."

"Could it be made bigger or smaller?"

"I suppose it would stretch. I don't want to do it. I hate trying to stretch boats. You always end up with a compromise. It is not good. This boat just the way she is does just exactly what she is supposed to. She carries her people. She rows. She sails. Why not just leave her alone?"

"BEMBO plans are for sale ... construction plans and everything?"

"Yes. The construction plans are a little strange. I want to talk to somebody about that."

"In what sense are the construction plans strange?"

"She has an off-center centerboard and I didn't draw the thing quite the way

I wanted to."

"What would you change?"

"The way things were fitted. The fitting of it."

"Were the Bahamian boats built with an off-center centerboard?"

"No."

"Why did you design an off-center centerboard?"

"More room."

"What more room did you get?"

"Leg room and things inside."

"So was it sort of a test?"

"Yes, it was a complete test."

"If you built it again would you build an off-center centerboard?"

"I think so."

"What would you do differently if you say you weren't happy with it?"

"I'd copy the construction of T and G's boat."

"So it's the constructional method of the centerboard case?"

"Yes."

"T and G's boat is the Whitehall named RESCUE?"

"Not an exact copy of RESCUE. I changed her in places ... has to tinker! The off-center case construction is the only thing bothering me about the boat BEMBO. I'd like Paul to help on that as he has great knowledge of centerboard cases. I named it BEMBO for my youngest son. Changed to North Shore Dinghy because that was who was building her."

Bob Baker is gone now, but his legacy of creative design of lovely traditional boats exists in his drawings and in his commentary on them. I know little about the constraints of designing boats,

but I know what quickens my pulse in a beautiful boat. When I saw SAMANTHA that fall in Christmas Cove my pulse quickened. Just beautiful. I could never hope to build such a boat but I sure could still fall in love with her. And Bob's small boats, like BEMBO, have that same air of gracefulness and beauty. Pete and Steve and Julia are determined to carry on Bob's work. Pete, who admits to little knowledge of boatbuilding (she restores old houses) is putting together Bob's lifework into publishable form. Steve, who is a professional naval architect, is finishing off the details on the plans as well as designing his own small boats now, and Julie is out in the shop building the boats Bob dreamed up.

NELLIE under sail (Bill Page's BEMBO).



If only  
Bob  
could  
have  
seen it...



The 240 OF WESTPORT, built by the Rockport Apprenticeship and displayed at the Wooden Boat Show, is a belated realization of an early Bob Baker dream. Bob drew up the conception in 1949 when he was in his early 20's and just setting out on his forshortened career in designing lovely traditional wooden boats and restoring and researching original classics. The drawing, not much more than a pictorial concept, was put aside 36 years ago and forgotten as Bob went on to other things. It surfaced amongst his accumulated files of designs when his widow Ann ("Pete") and friend Lance Lee, were going through the papers to see what else they might find. Lance fell for the beautiful clipper bowed craft and Pete's son, Steve, a trained naval architect, created the lines and offsets for Lance. The boat was built in the spring of '85 at Rockport and trailered down to Baker's hometown of Westport, MA for launching two days before it was to go on display at the Wooden Boat Show. On the transom the name, ROBERT H. BAKER.

Late afternoon of August 13th a crowd of about 300 gathered at the public ramp in Westport and the Apprenticeship people who had brought the boat down overland, got her off into the water after appropriate ceremonies in memory of Bob. After a row out beyond the congested mooring area near the ramp in the Westport River, the sails went up, and the ROBERT H. BAKER then sailed back and forth past the pier, tacking, jibing, running, reaching, and even sailing right up alongside the pier to take on Baker's son, who had earlier been out in a smaller boat taking photos. Lots of well wishers stayed around to watch this dream come true, Baker's family was tremendously pleased at the interest and support shown. And everyone who watched that lovely boat sailing on the river fell in love with it. After 36 years, a man's early conception of what ought to be a nice big daysailer was on the water. If only Bob could have seen it...



From the top: In memory of . . .  
Into the sea.  
Rowing out to catch the breeze.

Report & Photos by Bob Hicks

Know what I think? Friends are a lot like boats. Yep. Take care of 'em and they'll be around for a good long while. Friends, like boats, seem to come along, usually one at a time. And, if you're like me, you're not so selective how you meet up with either of 'em. That's boats OR friends. It simply doesn't matter. Really.

I've got an advanced degree in the behavioral sciences. I can cite the studies, if I really have to, but just for the sake of argument, take my word for it. It doesn't matter where or how you meet your boats or friends, it's how you treat 'em later on that matters.

Know what else I think? The best kinda friends are the ones who already have their own boats. Don't get me wrong, I love to share. Bet you do, too, it's the shared interest thing. After all, say you like girls for an ubiquitous example. Say you like girls with blond hair. Hey, lots of folks do. It could be what I mean by a "shared interest." But just try to go up to some strange guy in the grocery store parking lot with a pretty blond girl hanging on his arm and say something like, "Hey, that's a good lookin' girl ya got there. I got one like that at home. Maybe we could go do something with 'em sometime?" Try that and you're likely to at least get arrested, more like shot!

But what if you take a nicely turned out Wellsford or Michalak, for example, one you maybe spent a winter or more turning out from a stack of plywood, a mountain of sawdust and considerable noise. Now take that little girl to the same grocery store parking lot and just see what happens. People will leave ice cream and babies in their shopping carts and make a beeline over to check out your "cute/prett/interesting REALLY COOL MAN!!" creation. You know it's true.

One more thing, I think. While most people figure they can never have too many friends, some of us would have you believe it's the same for boats. It's really best to be with 'em one at a time. Maybe small groups now and then. Anyhow, that's the theoretical underpinnings of this tale. And this past year I've gone to considerable effort to make a scientific appraisal of my heretofore working hypothesis.

Over the past several years I had become what I'll refer to as a boat building recluse. I came to prefer the company of my table saw and clamp rack and orbital sanders to that of people. At least it came to feel like that. I was dragging these woebegone hulls and parts of hulls home in serial fashion. Kate finally turned a deaf ear to my standard dodge, "What new boat? Oh that...new...boat... yeah, looks pretty rough... but just wait'll I

## Friends are a Lot Like Boats

By Dan Rogers

get 'er overhauled and back in the water... just you wait..."

We've been living on the hard, here at 48N 117W, for going on six winters. Each of those winters seems like one or two or three of my "little floaty friends" came to live with us. Somehow, there's about, well, less than 20 hulls hanging, parked, stacked and otherwise put out of sight someplace around here now. Most of 'em have been overhauled, completely rebuilt or more likely, transmogrified to something not even resembling the original designer's or builder's intentions. But what's the use of doing something like that if I spend more time with a varnish brush in my hand than a mooring line or an anchor rode?

I figured it was time to, maybe, make some people friends, mostly people with boats. The best place to find people with boats? For the sake of this discussion, I'll exempt the jet ski and the metalflake bass boat crowds. The best place to meet folks with boats, the very folks who could make the best enduring friends, is at one or more of the organized small boat gatherings that have proliferated all over the country. They're usually called messabouts. It's not strictly required, but if you take a boat, or two, to one of these messabouts, all you have to do is smile. Well, maybe smile and compliment some other guy on his "pretty little girl." Yep, that's about how it works. Before you know it you're working on making a new friend.

That's what this particular boat building recluse decided to do. It was a New Year's resolution. I even wrote it down, "I resolve, in 2014, to actually USE these boats. I further resolve to make new connections with new people who have a shared interest in the general care and feeding of boatflesh." Actually, it was simpler than that, I simply decided to do more boating and less fixing/modifying/building.

Somehow, all that newfound "doing" required one whole lot of DRIVING. Towing a boat trailer, that is. Somehow, since about the Fourth of July (it's right now smack in the middle of October as I write this) I have managed to pull various members of the fleet nearly 8,000 miles.

I explored all the lakes we later went to during the Movable Messabout that happened over seven days in September. I took *Lady Bug* all the way over to Sucia Island to meet up with the regulars at that quite famous boat people gathering. I towed *Roughneck*

with *Shenanigan* in our local Fourth of July boat parade. I trailered *Shenanigan* and *Limerick* all the way to Toledo, Oregon, for the wooden boat festival there and met quite a few of those hale fellows well met COOTS.

I took *Punkin' Seed* and *Kokobot* and *Lady Bug* and *Shenanigan* and *Paint Bucket* and *Limerick* and *Roughneck* and *Old Salt* to about half dozen local ponds, streams, lakes and bigger over the course of the summer. Lots and lots of trips to and from storage and the launch ramps. A regular frequent flyer.

And each time on every trip I met at least somebody who wanted to talk about boats. Usually at a launch ramp or dock. Often in the gas station. Sometimes even at a stoplight. I've got some new business cards shoved in my wallet, scribbled email addresses and even had some follow up meetings with new friends to show for all that.

But, the very best place to meet folks most of us would want to keep as friends, is at the messabouts. Sucia was like that. Toledo was like that. Of course, our Movable Messabout was like that.

Then the Big Daddy. I saddled up and drove off to Sail Oklahoma 2014. I was privileged to travel in company with another boat folk who I met at the September Movable Messabout, a guy I'd like to keep as a friend, Dennis. We drove separate truck/boat combos close to 4,000 miles more or less in company. My rig is older and slower but we kept in touch by phone and met up for gas stops (about a bazillion gallons of gas to tow a boat to Oklahoma) meals and overnight camps. We each came away from Eufaula with a fistful of new friends and put faces to names that we only knew from the forums, personal emails, etc.

We also met lots of momentary acquaintances who came over to check out our boats in those gas stations, restaurant parking lots and campgrounds. Dennis got hurt and I got sick so we also met any number of nice people in several emergency rooms and clinics coming and going. Not the best way to want to meet people.

But hey, people are people and you never know where a new friend or boat could pop up. In fact, I was offered a couple "free" boats in places like that. Fortunately, I got home with exactly the number of boats I left with. *Shenanigan* was soooooo damn popular, I'd be nuts to want to part with her.

So there you have it. Pseudo scientific evidence to prove that all you have to do to make new friends is to drag a boat to a messabout and, say "hello." Maybe compliment somebody else on his or her boat. Of course, you might have to share. But that's really what it's all about.



Now a new sister has showed up. Rather unexpectedly. And she's a really big girl.

## "Give Me your Huddled Masses..."

By Dan Rogers

It's that time of year when all the girls congregate under a roof and get ready for snow. We've grown to three RV storage stalls, two deep and four wide.



Looks like a full house...



That's not counting the one back in the shop for trim and finishing...



## 1st Annual PlyWooden Boat Festival

By Sandra Leinweber  
Photos by Gerard Mittelstaedt

The weather was perfect, the setting ideal and the first annual PlyWooden Boat Festival in Port Aransas, Texas, came to life the morning of Friday, October 17. Trucks and cars pulling boats began arriving just after 8am and, in the two days that followed, they just kept arriving! Ninety plus boats of all shapes and sizes along with their proud owners and builders filled the park. The Festival was a joint effort conceived and implemented by Rick Prat of Farley Boat Works, Frank Coletta, president of the Traditional Small Craft Association and Chuck Leinweber, owner of Duckworks.

Boat building essentials classes were taught by John Welsford (New Zealand), designer of beautiful boats. Designer Michael Storer (Australia/Philippines), author Tom Pamperin, designer/builder Jacques Mertens and designer Richard Woods all gave presentations about their work.





Bolger folding schooner (Chris Breaux) and Scamp *Fat Bottomed Girl* (Marty Worline).



It was a dark and stormy night. No, really. It was. I know writers use that cliché to build suspense, and adventure writers use the dramatic flashback to some dark and stormy night to allow their hero (usually themselves) to reminisce about what craziness had brought them to that dangerous situation on that dark and stormy night. But this trip started on a dark and stormy night from the git go.

For several years I have loved Baja, Mexico, and have made several trips down there to sail. The wonderful wilderness, majestic desert mountains, the sea and sea life, certainly the wonderful people and great food, all make it a paradise. With a trip to Baja on the agenda again this year with my new sailing kayak *Vagabunda*, I was looking for a good long shakedown trip here near my home in Salt Lake City, Utah, about two weeks or so, to make sure all my skills and gear would be up to the rigors of Baja.

I thought about Lake Powell, certainly beautiful but not a good sailing lake. Lake Meade? A reasonable option but with the low water level the “bathtub ring” makes it a pretty dreary place. Then I realized I have my very own Baja right here in my own front yard. The Great Salt Lake! I had pretty much been ignoring the “GSL” for 40 years for not very good reasons. Too salty, I thought, too buggy, too stinky, too shallow, with all

## A Baja/Utah Sailing Adventure

### September 2014

By Kyle Williams

the shoreline surrounded by miles of sucking mud flats. Boy was I wrong and I lost out on many years of great adventure I could have had out here.

The GSL is one of the largest “dead seas” in the world. River water for hundreds of miles around drains into this lake with no outlet to die a salty death. The GSL is about three times as salty as the ocean and nothing much can live in the briny water except a tiny brine shrimp that is harvested by very tough guys out on the lake for months every autumn, and brine flies (no relation to the shrimp), both of which feed on a few species of algae that also live there. These, in turn, are food for millions of migratory birds that pass through here on the Pacific Flyway on their way to the Arctic every spring. The lake is a remnant of ancient Lake Bonneville that once covered several western states about 1,000’ deep. One can still see the old line of the shore up on the face of the surrounding hills.

At its modern peak in the early 1980s, the lake was about 100 miles long and 50 miles wide. Now, with the water level shrinking from years of overuse and drought and vast sections carved off by dykes, levees, causeways and evaporation ponds for extracting minerals, the current lake is about 30 miles long and 15 miles wide. There are several islands in the lake, Antelope, Stansbury, Carrington, Hat, Gunnison, Fremont, to name a few. Most of these are technically not islands anymore as the shrinking water level has left them connected to the mainland by big sand flats that allow one to walk, even drive, out to almost all of them.

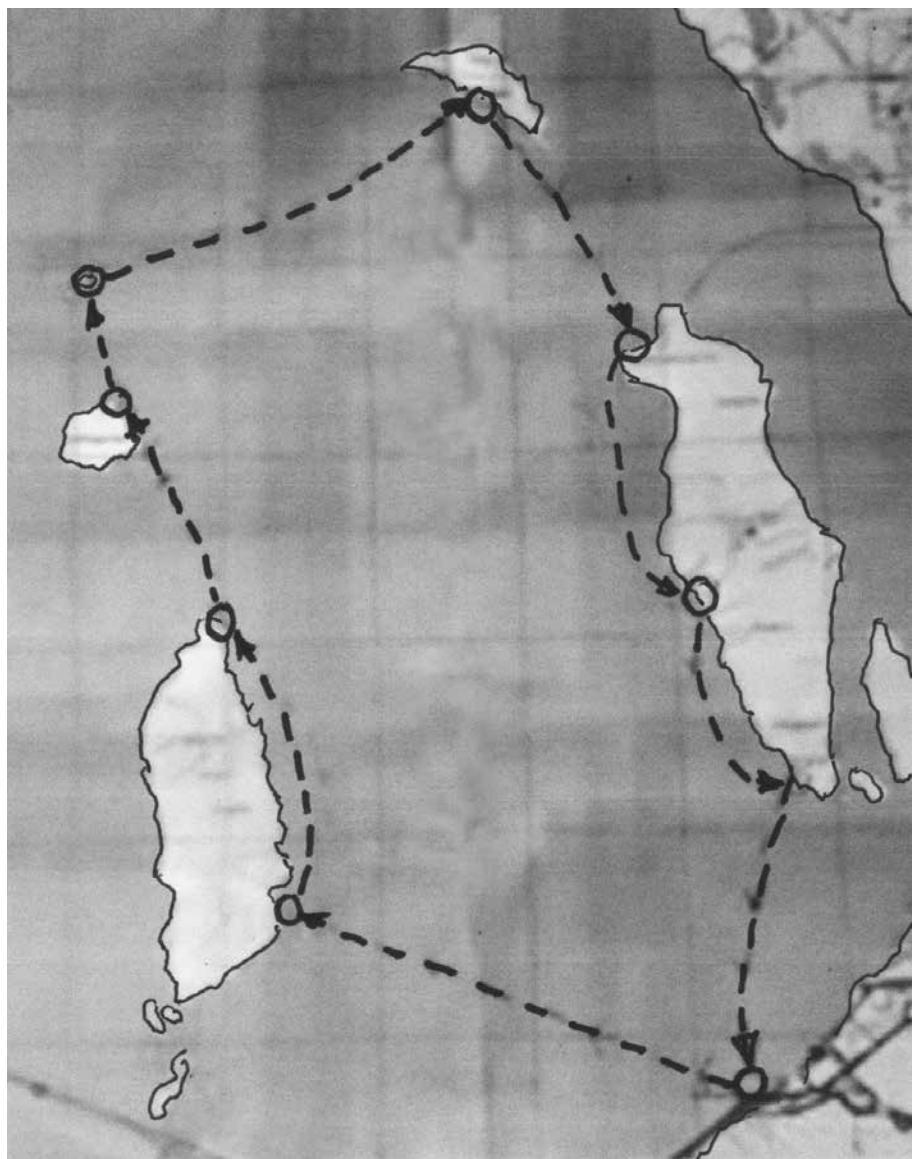
There never has been any significant sort of recreation or real estate development on the lake. For 100 years the Saltair resort on the south shore has struggled to make a go of it. They built a big dance hall with giant golden St Petersburgesque onion dome towers. Sort of an odd choice, if you ask me. They once had amusement park rides back in the day and held pretty big concerts. Old timers recall seeing the Beach Boys there. The place has burned down a few times and got flooded out in the high water days in the ‘80s. I recall seeing pictures of a guy in a boat rowing across the dance floor!

It has been restored again and opened as a concert venue. The state has built two marinas but low water has forced closure of the one at Antelope Island and the one on the south shore can now only handle shallower draft boats. The bulk of any other development has been industrial. The west side of the lake has become the domain of the mineral extraction folks, mostly via giant evaporation ponds.

When I was a kid my family moved to Utah from Oregon. I had loved small boats even back then and had just restored an old home-built flatwater kayak I got from a buddy. The first thing I noticed when I looked at the map of Utah was this giant lake right next to town. This was going to be great! I didn’t drive yet but it was so close to my home and I planned to build a little trailer for the kayak and tow it to the lake with my bike. But when we got here I fell in love with the mountains, climbing and hiking and skiing became my passions for the next 35 years and the lake and the kayak were forgotten. I think my dad hauled it to the dump when I was away at college.

When I got into sailing a while back I met several folks with sailboats out on the GSL. The few times I went out with them were fun, but there didn’t seem to be anywhere cool to go and everybody just seemed to go out, sailed around in circles, watched the depth gauge and made sharp U-turns when they hit shallow water again and again and again, have a glass of wine watching the sunset and motor back in. Not that any of that was bad, not just the sort of sailing exploring adventures I had in mind.

Then I met Josh Church recently and he said he had been out on many multi day cruises on the lake, anchoring out overnight, having a great time. It was true that there were vast sections that were too shallow for his 4’ deep keel and he had to anchor a few miles offshore of some islands, but he was out having a great time in a truly wilderness setting. Talking to Josh I realized that the GSL would be perfect for my kayak. I could hop from island to island, sail in water as little as 6” deep, pull up on shore, camp in wonderful secluded desert wilderness. Just like Baja. OK, sure. It is missing the sea life, the whales, the dolphins, the pelicans, the



wonderful “south of the border” charm, people, music and food, but it is still an amazing place to enjoy a grand wild adventure, loving the desert, the seclusion, the magnificent mountain vistas across sparkling water.

The Saturday I had planned to leave was one of the nastiest on record with cold rain and fierce winds. I stayed in bed and started out the next day under partly cloudy skies and moderate winds from the east, perfect for heading west as I was. My sailing kayak performed perfectly. I made 13 miles that day, one of the longest of the whole trip. I did run into some shallows and had to walk the boat through a “rock garden” of tufa knobs for a while (tufa is a soft rock formed by minerals precipitating out of the water). I camped on the south end of Stansbury Island on a sandy spit. That night a big bad thunderstorm came over and thrashed on me for about two hours.

I have spent a lot of time out camping in small tents in bad storms, but never in conditions like that before. The wind was blowing my tent over so I sat on that side of the tent with my arms up holding the wall from collapsing. I felt like that raw army recruit who was always screwing up at basic training and his drill sergeant made him run around all day holding his gun up in the air (of course, he goes on to save the platoon with his strength and valor). But I wasn’t in a war zone, it just sounded that way. Lightning bolts and simlthunder crashed around me for hours. Flash, crash, boom. The rain pounded down in waves, like a fire hose turned on patriots demonstrating in a town square.

I was thinking perhaps I should put on some pants in case the tent blew out and I had to scurry to another foxhole, but it took both hands to keep the tent up so I just sat there bare bummed and whimpering shamelessly. I can see the family reunion scene with my daughter many years from now, “Grandma Kenzie, was great grandpa Kyle brave when the worst storm of the century paddled his bum out on the Great Lake?”

“No, Julito” she replied, “He wasn’t brave, he wasn’t wearing any pants and we all know that you can’t be brave if you are not wearing any pants. He just sat there in that tent whimpering shamelessly.” Julito, wanting to be brave, never again went to bed without wearing Gore Tex pants. No amount of pleading or threatening or bribing could change him. Bearded psychotherapists with round spectacles would study his behavior and mumble among themselves and shake their heads. Years later he mentioned this odd fact about himself in his Match.com profile and he met a spunky kayak sailor named Wind Song who understood him perfectly and they proceeded to complete the second ever sailing kayak circumnavigation of the Great Salt Lake and went on to solve the mystery of why pelicans stopped nesting on Hat Island.



(Note: Travelers on the GSL should be prepared for quickly rising strong winds and big powerful waves.)

My boat is a sailing kayak rig, basically cobbled together out of spare parts. The hull is a very good two person touring kayak with a foot operated rudder. I added homemade outriggers for added stability, a leeboard, mast and sail and I sewed a spray skirt out of castoff boat cover material I found in a dumpster back in California. I have been working on her for two seasons now, sailing almost every week from April to October, upgrading to some store bought parts, making little improvements continuously here and there and she really is turning out to be a fine little craft. She is rugged, reliable, sails well and I can paddle when I need to. I admit I am an unenthusiastic paddler. I know many people love it and wax poetic about “the song of the paddle,” but I am a sailor, and for me every paddle stroke is an anthem to my failure to get to where I am going under sail. But certainly paddling is better than needing a motor!



The next day I sailed up to the north end of Stansbury and camped near what I think is the one and only beachfront cabin on the entire lake. It seemed abandoned and didn’t look like anyone had been there in a long time. The graded track into it was overgrown with weeds and brush. The cabin was of modern construction with vinyl siding, metal roof, huge two story glass wall facing the lake. Inside were beautiful wide pine plank paneling and vaulted ceiling, really a treasure. Too bad whoever owns it doesn’t seem to be using it. The inside was a mess, a window was broken out and there was a huge hawk nest on the second story deck!

I had arranged with my friend Josh to report in with him by cell phone every few days. He had told me that he has coverage across almost the whole lake. He must have a

better cell phone than I have. I had cell coverage this morning and had checked in with him after the big storm, but no signal up this far. Hmmm. There was a small brine shrimp harvest marina on the north tip of the island and I could see people there but I didn’t bother them. Nothing to worry about yet.

Tuesday I woke up early to a drizzle and the forecast on my NOAA weather radio called for scattered thunderstorms all day so I rolled over and went back to sleep. I woke up about 9am with bright sun and clear skies so I packed up fast and launched for Carrington Island five miles away. By the time I was moving, the sky had quickly clouded over again and a frisky wind piped up out of the west and I made the crossing in a little over an hour! *Vagabunda* was screaming along on that beam reach.

I walked around the island for a while, climbing up to the summit, and saw an awe-

some campsite on the north end, a mile away. Up over the summit I noticed the ground was pock marked with big craters and odd looking rusty metal bits scattered about. The craters were old, all grown over, and I wondered if some treasure hunter had dug about looking for lost Aztec gold or something. Just then two fighter jets from Hill Field went screaming overhead heading for the west desert practice bombing ranges. I then recalled someone saying this used to be a bombing target and these craters were direct hits and the metal shards were metal bomb-casing shrapnel. So glad to know they could hit an island. (I heard Iraq Air Force veterans boast they now can put a bomb down Saddam Hussein’s chimney. If they only knew which chimney...)

I walked back to the boat and another thunderstorm looked like it was coming in



so I wrapped up in a tarp under a bush and waited for all hell to break loose again like the other night. It never did erupt but I had fallen asleep and enjoyed a sweet little nap and woke to warmer sunny conditions. I launched the boat again and headed to that nice spot around the corner and put in a snug little camp. Because most of the land I was camping on this trip was loose sand or gravel, I made it a practice to back up all the tent pegs with rocks. At this camp, every rock I lifted up was crawling with lizards that darted off to safer rocks. I wonder how many lizards I saw more than once! They must have thought the world was coming to an end.

The next morning, Wednesday, was clear but cold. I noticed a group of guys driving around on ATVs and doing some sort of work on the beach. I walked over, introduced myself, asked one if they had phones with cell service. He said yes and I could use it to call Josh and report in. Since that first morning three days ago I had not had any coverage. Even up on top of the ridges I had hiked up. Nothing. Then as I walked away from these guys my phone chirped and I had coverage just long enough to receive a text message from a friend hoping all was well. By the time I tried to respond the signal was lost, mood was spoiled and no signal ever again until Thursday evening on Fremont Island. I used to have a Spot messenger that let me use satellites to let everyone back home know all is well. I guess I should get one again. Or just not tell anyone I am going so they don't worry!

The brine shrimp guys were just out scouting for good places, the season didn't open until the following day, so I invited them over for coffee. Several came over to my camp and we had fun comparing projects. All of them were immigrants from Thailand, Sudan, Somalia, Iraq. They lived at these company shrimp camps out there, made \$10 hour with food and lodging included. They all said it was hard work but all seemed very happy with it all. Some had been coming out for years. I later found out that they had spread the word around the lake that some crazy guy in a kayak was out there.



I wanted to go on up to Hat Island, only three miles north and the wind was blowing from the north, so I just paddled. It was a slog but of short distress. I got into a big area of those tufa heads and, after trying to paddle through them and going aground several times, again I just got out and waded, leading the boat like a tame little burro. It was so nice to have my entire camp just follow along with hardly any effort at all. So much easier than backpacking! After a while I started to get cold and my feet were numb so I called it done, pulled the boat into a rocky little cove about 1pm and took up life on dry land again.

Hat Island is a tiny pile of rocks out in the middle of the lake where pelicans nest in

the spring. It was totally deserted now. No evidence of any mass nesting now except for millions of bird bones scattered all over the place. So many, in fact, it seemed incredible that any birds had survived to nest next year! But I guess they do. Thousands every year. Odd that there were no carcasses of partially decomposed birds, just millions of bones. With the island now connected to the mainland by the sand bar I imagine coyotes, foxes and rats have a feast out there when the birds are nesting. In fact, I wonder how much longer the birds will use that place to nest? Seems not so ideal anymore.



The forecast looked favorable for Thursday to be good for a crossing over to Promontory Point. That will be 13 miles of open water with the potential for big wind and waves to happen with nowhere in the middle to hop out to safety, so I was prepared to wait days if I had to for conditions to be right but tomorrow looked good. The storm was moving out, high pressure was building, and winds from the west (I was heading east). I wanted an early start so I set my alarm for 5:30am and had everything as ready as possible for a quick getaway in the morning. I admit when the alarm went off that early I rethought my strategy and dozed on for another 30 minutes, then scampered to get packed and out to the boat.

It all worked out and I was on the water by 7:30am and it was just light enough to see without needing a headlamp. The winds were brisk out of the west as predicted and I was headed northeast so it was perfect. I was going pretty fast, average about 4mph. I was making good time, the sky was clear and sunny by midway across. After a few hours with winds that were pretty strong, and because of the long fetch (the distance

the wind can blow across the water to make the waves) the waves were getting pretty big, about 3'-4'. Pretty serious conditions but they were mostly swells, not breaking waves. They came in on my hind right quarter and the boat mostly just bobbed nicely as the waves rolled on under harmlessly.

A few, though, seemed to roll back onto me from the down wave side of the boat and would slosh back up over the spray skirt. The skirt was working perfectly and the water would just roll off with no problems. Even with all that I only had a few sponges worth to swab out when I got to the other side. I was very pleased with how the boat handled those bigger conditions but I was a bit worried what would have happened if it had gotten worse, with stronger wind and bigger waves. That is the thing about gaining experience. All you can do is just keep pushing the edge a little further out each time, sometimes on purpose, sometimes just because it happens, and you hope you make it. Each time you do you learn something and gain confidence in your skills and gear until at some point you get in over the limit and it all gets very nasty. But all was fine today.

The travel distance to Fremont Island was about the same as to Promontory and, since I was a few days behind in trying to meet up with my friends at Antelope Island, and since there was nothing really very exciting for me at Promontory anyway, I set the course for Fremont and landed there instead, after a four hour crossing. I was tired and hungry since in those big sea conditions I couldn't take any time to rest or eat while underway. I don't know what sort of passages and conditions I will run into in the future, but I can't imagine having to do many other crossings that would be much bigger than this one, so I was pretty pleased that it all went so well. I sat on the beach and drank the one beer I had brought along just to celebrate completing this crossing.

I hiked up to the top of the ridge on Fremont and got cell signal so I called anyone who would be worrying and checked in with them all. That was nice. As I hiked along I found the skull of a desert bighorn sheep. The horn curl was a full circle plus a bit. I wandered about, exploring a bit, then set up camp down by the beach.

The next day, Friday, I sailed and paddled the eight miles on over to Antelope Island where my friends from the Wasatch Moun-





tain Club would be arriving for a three day car camp. The low water forced me to beach the boat almost a mile from the Bridger Bay campground. That made for a long foot slog with all my gear. I asked a ranger where I could get water and he pointed to the visitor center about two miles along the beach across the bay. I almost cried. I had been there before and had seemed to recall there being a water spigot at this campground but no.

A fellow just then coming out of a giant motorhome heard us talking and asked, "How much do you need? I have plenty here in my rig, you can have all you want." Schweet! It turned out he was there with the Wasatch Mountain Club, John was his name, and the nicest guy ever. I was a bit surprised at his RV because I was not used to mountain clubbers showing up in RVs bigger than my house. They have tended to be a small tent crowd. As I got to know him though, I learned that he has recently organized five day backpacking trips into the Uintas and the Grand Canyon, as well as just doing a 200 mile self support bike trip in Yellowstone. Certainly he is no slacker. Since he was not using the tent spot at his site he offered to let me use it, which turned out to be the best site in the park on nice soft sand right in the shade of the only tree in the park.

The rest of the folks started showing up that evening and we had a nice time. We hiked Frary Peak on Saturday and enjoyed a huge potluck dinner party. After a week of eating trail mix and dried beans and rice, I really tucked into the fresh salads, the barbequed turkey and French fries. Those folks really know how to have a backcountry potluck dinner! Thanks to John and Julie and everyone for such a fine spread.

The next morning, Sunday, was my planned departure day but I delayed long enough to let a few folks play with my boat and joined in on another awesome potluck brunch with pancakes, eggs, bacon, potatoes. Thanks to Robert and Turtle! Incredible food once again.

I launched about 11am. The forecast was for moderate winds from the south, which sounded bad because I was headed south and pretty much expected to beat into it all day and have to paddle much of the distance. However, by the time I got going there was a light breeze out of the north and I just ghosted along downwind as easy as could be and had completed eight miles by 4pm and called it done, halfway along the shore of Antelope Island. I set up camp on a bluff near some huge rock outcrops, looking up a vast broad grassy valley. It was one of the nicest most picturesque campsites I think I have ever had anywhere!

My camping strategy on this sort of trip is pretty much like I was backpacking. I use a small tent, tiny cook stove, eat dried food. Since I didn't have any hope of finding fresh

water along the way, I started out carrying about 11 gallons, planning on using about a gallon a day, and hoped to be able to top up if I found some along the way. Since I had topped up with John's water at the club camp I still had plenty.

The next day, Monday, was dead calm, so paddled five miles to the south tip of Antelope Island and camped. It was a hot day, but I found a big rock outcrop with a huge crevice in the shade where I am sitting right now typing this. Talk about an office with a view! I am so lucky.

(Note: Travelers on the GSL should be aware of access rules on the various islands out there. Some are private or protected areas and permission should be requested before exploring.)

They say that sailing is the art of riding storms around. We had had a great storm last week with wonderful winds. But this week, with a high pressure system building over the area, the forecasts were, "Sunny, hot, light winds becoming calm." Not too happy for a sailor. I started out on the final leg of my journey under dead calm conditions and had resigned myself to paddling the entire six miles. No problem. I can do that. Just grit my teeth and turn up the music on my iPod. And paddle on. After a few minutes, though, a fresh breeze filled in from behind me and I flew across the next three miles in less than an hour with no paddling. I did

have to paddle in the last three miles, but it was a delightful day.

As I paddled in and pulled on to the marina launch ramp where my car was parked, a stern looking park ranger walked down and asked me, "Are you Kyle? We have been worrying about you. We found your car left here for days with no word to the harbor master, we looked inside and saw that we were dealing with a kayaker and proceeded to organize a rescue!" Fortunately they had somehow connected with my friend Josh, who I had been communicating with, and they realized that I was fine and had no need of rescue. I guess I should have left a note on the windshield telling them what my plan was.

So to my original "complaints" about GSL? There were very few bugs, at least at this time of year, and mostly only around the marina and the Antelope Island causeway, and these were non biting brine flies. Everywhere else was almost bug free. Stink? None, just good salty air. Too salty? The only effect of that I saw was that the cuffs of my clothes crusted up rock hard, (but then rinsed "clean" again every day). My zippers did seem to be pretty unhappy with it. I had to rinse them daily to keep them sliding. Too shallow? Maybe for a sailboat with a deep keel and yes, I did have to walk my boat through the shallows to dry land, but it was no big deal. And I never did see any mud, sucking or otherwise. The lake bottom and beaches were either hard sand or tufa rock flats, very good walking everywhere.

So was it as good as Baja? Well true, there is no spectacular sea life, no whales, no dolphins. But I had a grand wilderness adventure, I met wonderful, kind, warm, generous people. I enjoyed great food. I watched the most spectacular sunsets over sparkling water with majestic mountains everywhere I looked. No, it's not Baja, but I can sail around a bit, breath in a big whiff of salty air, maybe have a few shots of tequila and maybe not be able tell any difference. Muy Bueno!



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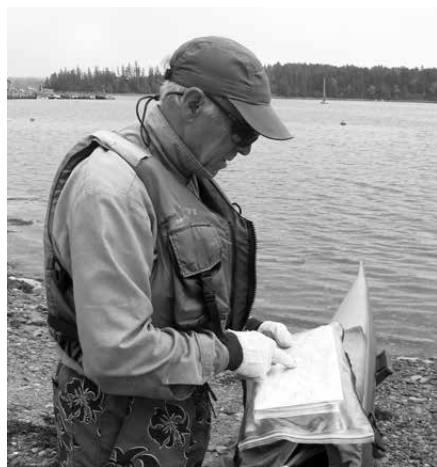
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After speeding around the province of Nova Scotia in two 400-mile trips (for a total of 832 miles) during the summers of 2003/04 (see my website for details of those canoe trips), I had made a note to return to Mahone Bay at a later date for some serious gunk-holing in that large island-studded bay. It is a truly spectacular area, sporting about 365 islands, one new island for every day of the year, if you wish. And if you believe the Sailing Directions (see notes), you are also apt to find better than usual boating weather here than along the rest of Nova Scotia's shores. "During fogs, which are frequent in July and August, the SW shore of Mahone Bay is usually clear with winds west of south". If that does not sound perfect for an early August fun paddle, I don't know what does.

No wonder Canadians consider Nova Scotia "Canada's Ocean Playground", and Mahone Bay personifies that designation. You find it a tad to the south of Halifax, and it stretches from the Tancook Islands, the town of Chester, all the way down to the fishing port of Lunenburg, home of the famous Grand Banks sailing schooner *Bluenose*, memorialized on the Canadian dime. To make this trip even more fun, I put my sleek carbon fiber solo outrigger canoe on my car roof instead of my heftier touring Sea Wind sea canoe. Nancy had found a lovely place for us just outside the tiny town of Mahone Bay, right on the water. There were endless possibilities for paddling day trips in the morning, leaving the afternoons and evenings for special moments for the two of us, still celebrating our 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. (No, we did not "elope" for our anniversary. There also was a small family "Fest" at home in Maine, in May.) But this was our time, just the two of us...and my boat :-). So here are a few of our outings:



Planning each trip carefully.

Three churches of Mahone Bay, NS.



# Canoeing Mahone Bay

## Nova Scotia, Canada Canada's Ocetan Playground

By Reinhard Zollitsch

### Day 1

Day 1 greeted us with pea soup fog; not what the Coast Pilot had promised. But I was off from our launching site at Whynachts Cove ("Weihnachten", meaning Christmas in German), feeling my way north along shore past Indian, Leg and Birch Points into Deep Cove. Swinging around that cove to Martin's Point and across to Young Island sounded like a prudent decision, rather than heading further out to sea. By then I was on a compass course past Klungemache and Zwicker Island back to my starting point.

Reading all those German place names, made me smile. It was obvious that this area was settled by Germans, mostly in the mid-1700s. (Lunenburg was founded by the British in 1753, intended to replace Mi'kmaq and Acadian Catholics with Protestants, mostly from Germany and Switzerland, but also England, Scotland and Ireland as well as New Englanders.) I quietly wondered what enticed them to come here and farm and fish as well as endure the harsh political and real climate. Would I have joined them? I came across the Atlantic about 200 years later, in 1962, as a penniless young graduate student, on a coal freighter to Norfolk, Virginia, after having lived the first 23 years of my life in the old "Heimat".

My thought was suddenly interrupted when a small sailboat popped out of the fog, somewhat bewildered, seeing me in my tiny boat and all alone. Did I know what I was doing out there? they queried. Not knowing what they wanted to hear, I assured them that I was all right and on course for the northern tip of Zwicker Island and the thoroughfare into Mahone Harbour. "Would you mind if we follow you in?" was their surprising reply. I gladly obliged them, not wanting to know if or why they were lost.

Since we could cook in our "Barn Apartment", a chicken dinner in house with our Acadian "poulet" spices and a celebratory glass of white wine made for a nice evening. Electric heat even dried out the rather moist sea air and the general dampness all around.



Mahone Bay Harbour: Start of 9-island trip.

### Day 2

Day 2 took us into Mahone Bay Harbour proper, which is oh so picturesque with its three churches lined up along the inner harbor. We headed for the town launching ramp and I put in right beside a motor cruiser from Newport, Rhode Island, who, as I found out, winters his boat in Belfast, Maine. We both were impressed with what the other had accomplished in his boat. But then I was off: straight out the harbor bay, around Strum, Andrews, Sheep, Goat, Rous, Ernst, Kaulback, Zwicker and Gifford, a total of nine islands, seven miles in about two hours, with fairly good visibility.

The afternoon was our Lunenburg day. In an earlier article I had already lamented the change of that city from a viable fishing and boat building port to a tourist town, a living museum selling its once glorious past. It now is a National Historic Site of Canada as well as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, but from my point of view, it seemed wrung out, its vitality gone. The roads were now choked with tourist cars and tour busses; gift shops and restaurants were crowded. I felt very uncomfortable elbowing our way down to the dock. Nancy pointed out, however, that Lunenburg is a popular and bustling tourist destination, and many people love it.

Three years ago we happened to drop into Lunenburg when the schooner *Bluenose II* was being rebuilt in a huge work shed along the water's edge. Clad in hard hats, we marveled at the strange synchronized dance of all the workers doing their job, re-planking the huge 151' long (46 meters) hull. The smell of fresh-sawn oak filled the hall, it was like a picture out of the past.

But it took several years, actually until the day before we arrived in Lunenburg, for the newly rebuilt *Bluenose II* to finally appear along the town dock to be admired by the crowds. Test sails were scheduled for later this year, we read on a shipboard sign, and visitors would have to wait to step on deck till next year. "Sorry!" A project, started with so much hope, bogged down in politics and insurance

company demands, the latest being to replace the traditional wooden rudder with a steel one. It turned out the steel rudder was so heavy it could not be turned by the traditional gears. Now engineers are working on an electric power steering assist. I shake my head. What a sorry state, for a great beautiful sailboat being tied up, in more than one sense.



*Bluenose II* in Lunenburg.

Nancy and I also wanted to see what became of the big shed the boat was rebuilt in. Gone completely! Time to leave town. Half-way back to Mahone Bay we found the little "Old Black Forest" German restaurant where we had eaten three years ago. The "Sauerbraten" was definitely tenderer than what I remember from growing up in post-war Germany. And the "Schwarzwälder Kirschtorte" (Black Forest Cherry Cake) was a scrumptious dessert. Good choice to lift one's spirits. My glass of sherry back in our "Barn Apartment" finished off this full day nicely.



Off to Oak Island and Chester.

### Day 3

Day 3 took us to the NW corner of Mahone Bay. My chart showed a public ramp at Western Shore, a mile north of famous/infamous Oak Island, the treasure island of

Heading out to the Rafuse Islands.



Canada. Since 1795, countless groups of treasure hunters have spent unbelievable sums of money trying to retrieve the alleged treasure sealed away in the over 100' deep shaft, which had the uncanny knack of filling with sea water no matter how many pumps were used to keep things dry. Pirates' treasure chests as well as important documents, like the original Shakespeare plays, which some claim were actually written by Sir Francis Bacon !!??, were believed to be hidden here.

Engineers estimate that it must have taken hundreds of laborers several years to dig and construct such a pit; a very unlikely place to hide any treasure from the eyes of the public, if you ask me. Whatever it is or was, I had to paddle by there and briefly touch land, or better the two rocky points on the north. From there I headed due east around about ten more islands (Frog, Clay, Quaker, Lynch, Mark, Mountain, Saddle, Woody and the two Meisners islands) into Chester Harbour.

The little town of Chester is the only place of significance just north of Lunenburg. It has a very active sailing club, with many popular youth summer sailing programs, as well as a most prestigious regatta for the "real" sailors from Halifax and the rest of Nova Scotia. It was fun seeing the youngsters joyfully practicing tacking and jibing their little Optimist dinghies, as well as watching the slightly older youths intently hoisting the spinnaker and keeping it filled on the slightly larger International 420s. And then there were the "big boys and girls" in their racy yachts motoring out to the starting line behind the Tancook Islands, serious determination in their eyes.

Fun was had by all. I was able to take out at the public ramp beside the Tancook Island ferry dock. Nancy greeted me there with a locally made juicy turkey sandwich, which I ate at a pagoda overlooking the busy Yacht Club.

### Day 4

One more day, Day 4, but the fog was even thicker than on day one. By noon I could see just enough to push off. I had planned to paddle as close to the Tancook Islands as time would permit me, hopefully to the Rafuse Islands, which could be a German corruption (mispronunciation) of the name "Refuge", because the three islands there form a perfect storm refuge anchorage. It reminded me also of "Refuge Harbor" on the western entrance to Narragansett Bay at Point Judith, Rhode Island.

Portage! (Passamaquoddy Bay).



Anyway, I worked out my courses in advance, went north of Gifford and Ernst Island and then headed SE around the southern tip of Spectacle and Mason Island. When the wind piped up, I decided that going around the outside of the two Rafuse islands was not prudent and went through the anchorage instead and only around one of the three islands there, Mason Island. With that I had kind of done what I had planned. It was another successful trip, and I decided to head home. My slender outrigger canoe was flying before the tail wind, and I was all smiles when I arrived at my take-out. Time for a hot shower and a cold beer.

### Homeward Bound

Our Nova Scotia trip was ending, but I left many more trips for future years. Since the drive home to Maine is too long for one day, Nancy and I normally stop in St. Andrews, New Brunswick. And yes, about seven miles from town, at the bar to Ministers Island to be exact, she sets me in to paddle around the island and back into the harbor proper. It was windy all right, and the Passamaquoddy Bay tide, which runs about 19' here, was ebbing hard, leaving me high and dry at the take-out town ramp. It was an awfully long portage over seaweed-covered rocks and gravel bars. Canadians consider portaging character-building. Sorry, not for me! Even carrying my 30lb boat was a chore, and I badly needed a big swig of "barley juice" to rehydrate. But all's well that ends well.

Not a bad vacation week, especially having Nancy around, driving to the put-ins and take-outs, but especially her company in the afternoons and evenings. What a luxury for a solo paddler! Thanks my dear.

But concerning the subject of Mahone Bay fog, I have to talk to the editors of the Coast Pilot...

### HYPERLINK

"mailto:reinhard@maine.edu"reinhard@maine.edu

### HYPERLINK

"http://www.ZollitschCanoeAdventure.com/"www.ZollitschCanoeAdventures.com

### Notes

Sailing Directions, Nova Scotia (Atlantic Coast) and Bay of Fundy. Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Ottawa, Canada, 1990.

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# Jon Dobbs' Peace River Trip

From Dave Lucas

If you should ever get an invitation from Jon Dobbs to go on a boat trip with him, my advice is to tell him thanks, but no thanks. If you're a candy ass like me you'll tell him hell no and run away fast. You all know that if I take you out on a boat you'll be in comfort fit for a king on my little launch with your every need anticipated before you even think of it. That's just the way I roll.

Jon, on the other hand, likes to get back a little closer to nature than I do, he's also a lot younger, only in his 50s. Jon is also the exclusive Florida dealer for a brand of "long-tail motor," I think he even races these things across rice paddies and mud flats. They're actually pretty cheap and he'll show you how to hook them up onto a motor. He's also a boat cop so you know he's a little crazy, kind of a trend with all of you, isn't it?

I'll let his story and pictures tell you about this trip and if I get any more details I'll forward them along. I've been on the Peace River before and can tell you that at least half of his 117 miles was in nothing but a swampy ditch.

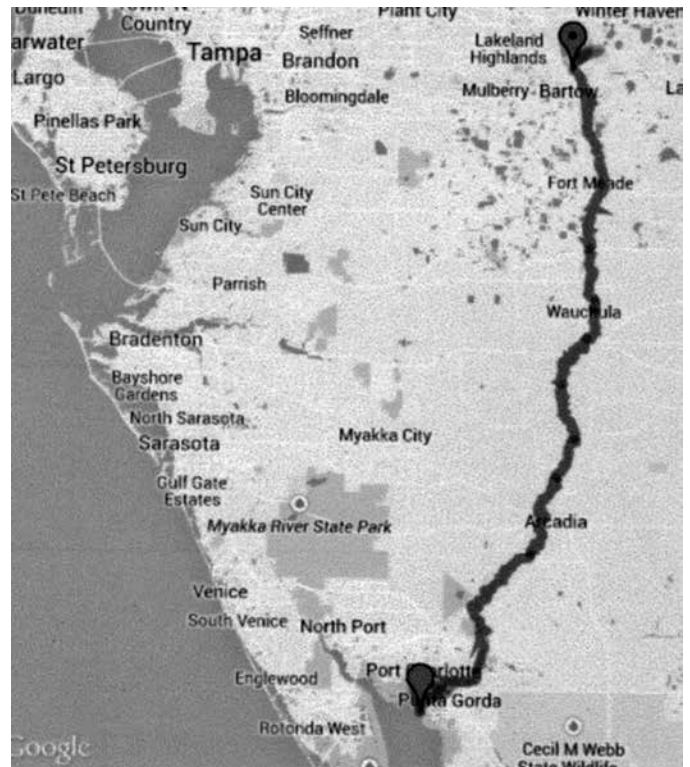
"I completed the 117 mile trip from the source of the Peace River at Lake Hancock in Bartow, Florida, to the end where it flows onto Charlotte Harbor at Punta Gorda. I made the trip in a 14' Widgeon duck boat powered by a 13hp Swamp Runner longtail motor. For the first 40 miles of the trip the only other motor driven vessel I saw was powered by one of my longtails.

The trip took three days with challenges such as sawing through logjams, running through shallow water, often hitting submerged logs and limestone ledges. With a 136' drop from its source to the mouth, the Peace River offered numerous rapids and two waterfalls to navigate. High winds in Charlotte Harbor also made for a salt soaked ride. I highly doubt another motor driven vessel has ever made this trip before. I burned five gallons of fuel for the whole trip.

The beautiful scenery was well worth it. I saw a variety of wildlife such as a bobcat, wild hogs, gators, white ibis, wood stork, great blue heron, snowy egret, wood duck, vulture, and osprey to name a few."

Jon Dobbs, [jdobbs1@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:jdobbs1@tampabay.rr.com)





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We continued sailing *Fun Too* out of Mystic, Connecticut, for a few more years. It was still pleasant, visiting our old familiar sailing neighborhoods.

For years the American Marine Industry had been building and selling more and more boats. From 1990 onwards, the American Marine Industry was selling around 300,000 boats a year, and did this for the next 14 years. Harbors filled up and mooring areas had long waiting lists for people with larger boats who wanted to get mooring space. Marinas were filled. All our former nice pleasant quiet little harbors that we had visited for years and where we had previously anchored now had town moorings that we had to use and pay for. Anchoring in most harbors was no longer permitted.

At the New Harbor on Block Island, in the late '70s and early '80s, nights were peaceful with the harbor primarily filled with sailboats at anchor. Sailors from other sailboats, rowing ashore in their dinghies on their way to one of the local restaurants for a lobster dinner, would quietly exchange greetings with friends or with new sailing arrivals coming to Block Island for the first time. Ragbaggers, as we derisively were called by power boaters, were a small, tightly knit group that looked out for one another.

As more and more powerboats were built and sold, the two Block Island marinas at New Harbor started catering to their main source of income, powerboat owners. The marinas introduced launch services to get people from their anchored boats to the marina without their having to row in dinghies. These two launch services ran until 1am. Boaters blowing their horns to call a launch that was nearby at 11pm didn't make for quiet harbor nights any more.

A major nuisance became powerboaters who had tuna towers equipped with high powered loudspeakers. They felt that they had to bless everyone within hearing range with their obnoxious modern music of various sorts. They loudly broadcast their juvenile tastes in music to everyone throughout the anchorage. It was served loud, VERY LOUD, and DEAFENING. We preferred to sit in our cockpit quietly listening to Mozart or Hayden, but with their loudspeakers blaring that was no longer possible. If we wanted to hear our music we had to retreat into the cabin, insert the hatch boards and close the hatch. Sitting in the cockpit, with a glass of wine, enjoying the evening ambience, was no longer possible.

The civility, and mutual respect, that we ragbaggers accorded one another was long gone. If we tried to sleep, launches charging through the field of anchored boats at full speed would almost roll us out of our berth with their wakes. On the last trips of the night, at 1am, the launch passengers were anything but considerate of the people who might have already gone to bed. They were returning from the restaurants and bars on the Island, carrying a "load." There was loud raucous laughter, singing, shrieks from the women as cold fingers caressed warm buttocks while they were being "helped" from the launch back on board their boat.

This proliferation of new powerboats also resulted in many a new powerboat owner who really didn't have a clue as to what he was doing out there. An example of this was when Block Island Sound was in a "normal" summer fog condition. One of the Goose Islanders, enroute to Block Island on his sailboat,

## Random Scenes from a Lifetime of Sailing

By Conbert Benneck

### More Sailing...

heard a motorboat approach. The motorboat appeared out of the fog, came alongside and the driver asked, "Where is Block...?"

Ed looked at his chart and gave him the compass heading to the entrance bell at New Harbor.

The motorboat driver answered, "Don't give me any of that compass course crap, just point!" Ed pointed in the direction of a totally invisible Block Island and the motorboat driver took off into the murky grey at high speed and disappeared. We had to wonder if he ever made it or if he just disappeared out to sea, and was gone, producing another boating statistic for the Monday newspaper. But...

With each passing year the costs of going sailing and for dock space at the marina kept climbing. There were the normally to be expected yearly price increases for summer dockage space. Winter boat storage charges kept escalating, too. In the beginning, winter storage charges for the boat included indoor storage for the mast. A few years later boat storage costs became one item and storage for the mast was a separate item that was calculated based on mast length.

One rainy weekend as we sat in the cabin, I went back over our previous year's boat costs, summer marina dock space rental and winter boat and mast storage, and made some calculations. I found that the per weekend sailing cost, from our mid May launch date to our hauling date in mid October had become very expensive. In addition to all these escalating costs, add the fact that there was no relaxation to be had on the water any more.

As *Fun Too's* owners, we came to the conclusion that we weren't having fun anymore. There were far too many obnoxious motorboat drivers on the water who used sailboats as slalom poles, disturbing our peaceful progress with their huge wakes, or who came charging over from afar to leer down into our cockpit from their flying bridge in the hopes of catching someone stretched out in the cockpit, sun bathing in the nude. There was no more quiet and peaceful sailing to be had. The "fun" and the solitude had totally gone out of sailing.

Over the years we had gradually noted this change, which came slowly and almost imperceptibly. What I described earlier were just some manifestations of the ever increasing density of powerboats on the water. The final straw for us came one Sunday evening. We had sailed home from Block Island and were heading back to the Mystic River, our last leg of the trip, under power in the very narrow Ram Island Channel. There was no wind and the water was flat. Our sails were down, furled, and the sail cover had already been put in place. We had another quarter mile to go before turning into the Mystic River at Noank Village.

Katharina, who enjoyed her afternoon cup of coffee, took advantage of this peaceful interlude and was in the galley brewing a pot of coffee using our porcelain coffee pot that had the Melitta filter holder containing the paper filter and the coffee grounds

perched on top of the coffee pot. The water in the kettle was boiling and she had begun to slowly pour the hot water into the open filter and onto the coffee grounds. I stood in the cockpit with the tiller between my legs, eyes focused on our next buoy and on the Sunday afternoon boat traffic as well as keeping an eye on the procession of sailboats heading up the Mystic River ahead of us.

At that moment I became aware of two large powerboats coming up behind us in this very narrow channel. They were both going about 30 knots side by side, right behind *Fun Too*, and a moment later were passing us, one to port and the other to starboard. *Fun Too* became the ham in their high speed motorboat sandwich. I yelled to Katharina to hang on but my warning was already much too late.

*Fun Too* rolled from gunwale to gunwale in the mighty wakes that these two extremely inconsiderate powerboaters had created. (It also happened to be a "NO WAKE" zone as well, since the channel was next to a large field of moored boats). The coffee pot, the filter holder with filter and coffee grounds, the freshly brewed coffee and the kettle with hot water flew all over the galley counter, the berths and the cabin floor. Katharina had scald burns from the boiling water that spilled over her as she tried to grab everything to keep it from falling off the galley counter.

As these two motorized idiots passed us, each turned from his flying bridge command post and hollered to his wife sitting in their aft cockpits, who then laughed uproariously at the predicament their husbands had just caused us as we rolled on our beam ends from their combined wakes.

I yelled to Katharina to give me my 12 gauge flare pistol, the large bore version for getting emergency red flares high up in the sky. I wanted to fire flares over their bridges, but Katharina procrastinated, and then she dithered a little more. She had to open the galley cabinet door, remove the plastic box containing the flare pistol and the shells, open the box, remove the pistol and the flare shells. By the time she had done this, and handed the individual pieces to me, at the speed the motorboats were going, both were already far beyond the range of my flare.

She was also looking at her burns and the mess in the cabin that these two stinkpot louts had just created. The porcelain Melitta filter holder with the filter paper and the coffee grounds, the coffee pot already half filled with coffee, plus the hot water kettle, were all still rolling around on the cabin sole carpet. Later, when we got back to Fort Rachel Marina, we spent the next several hours cleaning up the mess that these X@#%\$@#%\$% stinkpotters had caused.

It became the final straw. It was high time to sell *Fun Too*, leave the overcrowded coastal area filled with motorized yahoos and move on to some new form of sailing that would again give us the joy and the solitude that we so enjoyed.

### It was Time for a Change

Financial Considerations: As a mechanical engineer, I learned that in order to solve technical problems there were times when I had to scheme to find a new way to "defeat the bastards." But how?

Thoughts slowly formed. If regular quiet sailing, the type of sailing we had enjoyed for years, had gotten so expensive, if coastal harbors had gotten so crowded and the prolif-

eration rate of inconsiderate motorboat drivers had made life on the water miserable for us ragbaggers, then maybe it was high time to review our operation from a cost/pleasure standpoint and see what other sailing possibilities might exist.

We had sailed the same New England coastal areas in our Tripp-Lentsch 29 since 1975. How many more times did we want to sail to New Harbor, Block Island, on a weekend in summer? It had become a well worn rut. How many times did we want to follow the same old route on a two week vacation, sailing from Noank to Block Island, to Cuttyhunk, to Hadley's Harbor, to Cotuit, to Nantucket, to Edgartown, to Cuttyhunk and back to Noank again?

Every harbor was getting more crowded and the peace and quiet that we as sailors sought was nowhere to be found. Slowly, over the years, our sailing enjoyment had been diminished as the costs for going sailing had increased. Marinas raised their summer dockage rental fees as more and more boat owners compete for a limited number of dock spaces. Winter storage rates kept climbed, too.

When I looked at my bills, I found that we were spending about \$2,500 (in 1990 dollars) for boat expenses. Add to that car travel costs, bottom paint, replacement parts, insurance and other boat improvements and we quickly reached, or exceeded, the \$3,000 a year level. The sailing season in Connecticut, from mid May to mid October, is roughly 20 weeks, which would equal 40 days of weekends plus vacation times of two or three week cruises. Total boat use time would then be about 60 days per year. If we divided 60 days of boat use into a yearly cost of \$3,000, each day we went sailing costs \$50. Add in some rainy or too windy weekends, the odd hurricane advisory when we couldn't go sailing and had to pull the boat out of the water earlier than anticipated and we found that our daily boat use cost climbed still higher.

One alternative, with a much lower cost seemed to be trailer sailing. We could downsize to a smaller (and far less expensive) boat on a trailer and attach it to our car. That option suddenly opened up a whole new sailing world for us. Trailer sailing would allow us to go to whatever destination we would like to explore while getting there at highway driving speeds. An enticing new sailing area

then became a matter of a few hours of driving, rather than days of sailing, to get there the old way.

Explore the Chesapeake Bay? Why not? It's only about a six hour drive on the interstate highways from Connecticut. Maine? It's only a few hours away driving east on the interstate. How about a sail on the Hudson River for an afternoon? The Hudson River is just an hour and a half drive from Glastonbury.

What about quiet, and seclusion and nice little coves to hide in? With a trailerable sailboat, if we don't like where we are today, we retrieve our boat and can check out a different sailing area 50 miles away tomorrow. All of a sudden, thinking about a trailerable sailboat opened new doors to all sorts of previously impossible adventures. It offered us an immense world of new sailing possibilities.

Why spend a week sailing *Fun Too* from Noank, Connecticut, to Maine, if we want explore the Maine coast and its islands, if it then took us another week of sailing to get back to Connecticut, hard on the wind. To explore just a small part of the Maine coast we would need a minimum of four weeks of cruising time, one week of sailing to get there, two weeks to explore the new sailing areas and another week to sail back home again. Sailing *Fun Too* to Florida for a winter would takes weeks to travel down the Intercoastal Waterway to get there and more weeks to get back to Connecticut again.

But if we had a trailerable sailboat we could tow it to Maine in a few hours by car and spend all of our sailing time in areas we'd like to explore, Coastal Maine, or how about Moosehead Lake, or any of the other large Maine lakes? Similarly, sailing in Florida's warm, clear green waters only required three days of car travel to reach marvelous sailing possibilities. Instead of just dreaming of sailing in far off places, with a trailerable sailboat we could explore and sail the Florida Keys, or Florida's west coast areas.

Of course, a trailerable sailboat's interior couldn't compare with the comforts that we had installed in *Fun Too* during our 26 years of ownership, but what might a smaller boat's alternatives look like? Slowly these new thoughts began to percolate in our heads.

Does one really have to be able to live aboard to enjoy going sailing and gunk-holing? Our answer was "no." What sorts of

trailerable sailboats were available? What size boats could be towed by a small car? Were there any boats where two could sleep comfortably aboard? If we had a trailerable boat, where could we go? I started contemplating these possibilities.

To get a better idea of what sailing areas might be available with a trailerable sailboat, I took a regular automobile road map and started drawing circles with increasing 100 mile radii using Glastonbury as the center. Answers to that question quickly became very obvious.

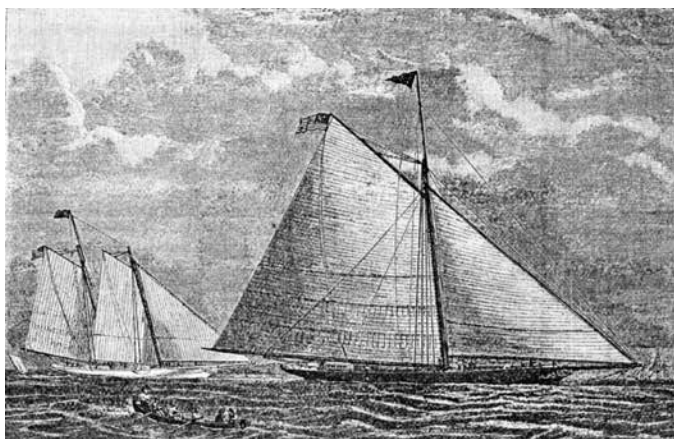
In an easy day's drive on an interstate highway we could be in Maine, at the Eastern shore of Chesapeake Bay, on Lake Champlain or at Lake Ontario. There were larger lakes in Connecticut and Massachusetts that were much closer, which also could be explored.

If we could easily get to distant places via an interstate highway, it opened up a whole new world of intriguing sailing possibilities, such as sailing the myriad islands in the North Channel of Lake Huron, or exploring the Apostle Islands in Lake Superior. All were places that would have been impossible to reach with *Fun Too* on any normal vacation.

Maybe we could also find places where we could go sailing without the amplified buzzing mosquito sounds of personal watercraft (PWCs) zooming about, or 500hp Cigarettes with straight exhaust pipes loudly crackling, announcing to everyone that they were out playing and look how fast they can go from gas pump to gas pump. Duh!

What we were looking for was silence as we sailed, with only the sound of the splash of a fish gulping an insect that had ventured too close to the water's surface, or a loon singing its song, or the chuckle and gurgle of a bow wave as a gentle wind carried us across the water to a new destination. Ah, then we would really be in ragbagger's heaven again.

Above all, sailing with a trailerable sailboat meant being able to go to areas with very shallow water where large, noisy, high powered motorboats wouldn't dare to go (there were probably lots of underwater rocks that would ruin propellers, and there were no gas pumps). This was much more goodness from our point of view. Perhaps we had found a new way for us to achieve a sailing Nirvana. Now we started researching trailer able sailboats in earnest. It was time for a change.



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The PLAINTIFF:  
All Who Sail the Waters  
The DEFENDANT:  
Marianne Unnaslahti Regan,  
aka the Frozen Finn,  
Ms Frozen Tundra, etc

**CHARGES:**

1. Failure to Obey Orders from a Superior
2. Dereliction of Duty
3. Gross Insubordination
4. Desertion Under Fire

Whereas the DEFENDANT has, on several occasions, knowingly and willingly exhibited general failure to obey orders, instructions and demands of a Boat's Captain, and

Whereas the DEFENDANT has recklessly and fully understanding her actions, failed her assigned and/or expected duties as assigned by her Superior, and

Whereas the DEFENDANT has doubted the actions of her Superior in public, has publicly spoken poorly of her Superior in public and questioned the authority of her Superior in public, and

Whereas the DEFENDANT quit her post and deserted her position while in the time of extreme emergency, this Court prays a verdict of guilty on all charges and appropriate punishment as cited in the Universal Code of Nautical Justice.

**Prosecutor's Statement**

While canoeing on her honeymoon her husband suddenly shouted, "Duck!" when he spotted a strand of barbed wire running across the river approximately 2" above the water. The Defendant failed to follow orders and sat bolt upright before she was flung to the bottom of the canoe as the wire zinged over the vessel scratching the gunnels the length of the canoe.

**Defense Statement**

I had been married to this yo yo for four days and had yet to fully trust him, actually trust has declined over 41 years of experience. Who was he to order me around? Furthermore, English is my fourth language following my native bilingual country that speaks Finnish and Swedish, I learned Spanish from a past boyfriend and learned English to study here in the US. "Duck" had little meaning to me. Was he pointing out ducks (he caught one once while attempting to fish) or did he mean "to duck?" How far and for what reason? The natural and logical reaction was to sit up and take a look around.

**Prosecutor's Statement**

The Defendant consistently failed to assist the Captain of the Sailing Vessel *Genny Sea* during mast raising, rigging, setting sail, etc by simply ignoring his orders. In fact, when on outings she simply goes a considerable distance away from the boat, sits at a bench and reads novels.

**Defense Statement**

I have absolutely no idea what a line, shroud, stay or wire are since I do not speak Nauticaleze. Rope is rope and it all looks the same to me. The alleged Captain (implying he has a meager knowledge of what he is doing) constantly raises his voice at me, continues to scream about hold this thingy or move a whatchamacallit that has no meaning to me. To avoid his hollering I simply get as far away from him as possible. He's the supposed sailor, not me.

# The Court Martial of My Wife

By Stephen D. (Doc) Regan

## The High Court of Nautical Supremacy and Universal Seamanship



**Prosecutor's Statement**

On one messabout the Defendant refused to sail with the Captain and simply ignored the social activities on the water by leaving the area and going downtown to shop. Worse, on Sunday morning when the entire fleet crossed Lake Pepin to eat breakfast at an incredible Swedish restaurant, purchase baked goods at a splendid bakery and look through sundry antique shops, the Defendant complained constantly while crossing the water and demanded she be carried from the boat rather than experience getting her shoes (cheap canvas ones at that) wet.

When returning to the boat she refused to climb aboard again, demanding she be carried to the boat. As the Captain shoved off he ordered the Defendant to man the tiller while he raised the sail. The Defendant held the tiller like it was a cracked eggshell and the boat immediately turned sidewise to the current. Upon being ordered to steer the boat in a different direction she turned the boat until the transom was facing the wind and the boat commenced toward the rock wall of the harbor. When the Captain yelled in terror, she simply let go of the tiller, crossed her arms and countered that there were children in the general vicinity and his swearing was unacceptable.

Once upon the rocks the Captain asked her to push off with the oar while he started the motor. Unfortunately, the motor was stuck in the mud. The Defendant continued to find fault with the Captain, openly demanded he adjust his tone and language, and refused to assist in any manner other than mention that the boat's paint was being scratched off in large chunks.

**Defendant Statement**

It was not my idea to attend this so called Minnesota Messabout. The only other women present stayed only long enough to take pictures and very quickly left for the Twin Cities. Dumb Butt...

"OBJECTION!"

"OVERRULED!"

As I said, Dumb Butt sailed across the Mississippi well enough but the shore was so

shallow he tossed the anchor onto the beach and then expected me to jump into waist deep water. I was not prepared to jump into water with my good clothes on and then go into a nice restaurant. No way. When we tried to leave the beach, Bird Brain left me at that Stick Thing while he went to the front of the boat to haul in the anchor. He started to yell at me in a mean spirit when I turned the Stick Thing so I turned it the other way and soon we were on the rocks, literally and figuratively. His language became outrageous, especially in front of children.

When he couldn't get the motor out of the mud he jumped over the side and tried to push the boat off the rocks while demanding that I do stuff with the Stick Thing. He was barefooted, the Ninny, and cut up his feet on the rocks, adding to greater volume of his foul language. He finally got the boat off the rocks and complained furiously across the river, during loading the boat and for four hours of the trip home. I remained quiet except for reminding him that his bloody feet were his own fault and I would be darned if I was going to clean up the bloody interior of the boat, to say nothing of the car's floor mats.

**Prosecutor's Statement**

As plainly observed, the Defendant consistently has shown contempt for the Captain of the Sailing Vessel and has been blatantly disrespectful and insubordinate toward her superior. Her own testimony clearly proffers evidence of her guilt on all counts. Your Honor and members of the nautical realm, this person is guilty, guilty, guilty and she deserves the absolute maximum of punishment warranted by these heinous crimes upon the high seas and waterways.

**Defendant Statement**

Your Honor and Members of the Watery Ways, I have neither the inclination nor interest to sail. I was raised on lakes in my native Finland and, in fact, my family's farm is bordered on three sides by lakes. I grew up around boats where we fished each summer day. Never did my brothers or father raised their voices at me, expect me to do stuff with the boat (that's a man's job) or even to clean the fish. Cook them, yes, but I didn't clean them. Never, ever has my family tipped over a boat, run it into rocks or injured themselves around the boat.

Dim Wit turned his little dinghy over just about every time he went out. The lake is littered with a debris field of his anchors, depth finders, food containers and even a mast with a mainsail. He traded the dinghy for a Potter 15 that is damned near impossible to turn over, but he has come close. I hate sitting in a boat leaning over about 70° with water coming over the side. I grip the railing so hard I lose circulation in my hands, my blood pressure soars and occasionally I scream in utter terror. I, therefore, do nothing with the boat, I do not wish to be in the boat with Captain Ahab or Admiral Nimitz or whoever Dumbo thinks he is, and I do not want to sail again. Ever, ever. Anyplace.

**Judge's Comment**

You have heard (or read) the charges against the Defendant, been exposed to the evidence of the case and have witnessed counter arguments. The decision of guilty or not guilty rests with the sailors of the *MAIB* crew. Please post your individual decisions at: [Regan1626@mchsi.com](mailto:Regan1626@mchsi.com).

The verdict is up to you.

After spending most of my working years as a lock and dam operator on the Mississippi River I had a chance to travel on the Erie Canal and also the Trent Severn Waterway in Canada. These trips would be a Busman's Holiday.

From time to time an article about these canals shows up in *MAIB*, the most recent one by Dale Niemann in the October issue. Dale and his friends traveled on a very small section of the Erie Canal system. Reading this reminded me of the trips that I made. I can proudly say that I have traveled the entire Erie Canal from west to east and I even went back and traveled parts of it a second time.

A few years ago, before I became a caregiver, I had opportunities to be a crewman on some sailboat deliveries. I couldn't turn down a chance to move a boat from Detroit to Marion, Massachusetts. It was to become a month long trip. I had delivered the *Hinzite* on several other occasions and the skipper was happy to have me on this trip. This would be my last trip on this boat as it was headed to Marion to participate in the Marion to Bermuda race. After the race the boat went to Europe and never got back to the US.

The trip started on the Detroit River and on into Lake Erie. We motorsailed the length of Lake Erie overnight and by mid afternoon we arrived at Buffalo. We motored down the Niagara River and through a government lock run by the Corps of Engineers. Its main purpose is to keep Lake Erie from draining out over the Niagara Falls. We had a long wait to get through that lock. From there we continued downstream as far as the town of Tonawanda at the western end of the canal. I was glad to enter the canal because I knew we were only a few miles above Niagara Falls.

The *Hinzite* is a 49' foot aluminum sloop with a 9' fin keel and a stick about 65' which had to come down because the canal has a 13' overhead clearance. We lost a couple of days waiting to get the mast down while tied up on a wall within easy walking of a grocery and several restaurants in Tonawanda. We finally got the stick down and placed it on some horses that were high enough so we could to walk under the mast and rigging.

There is about 400' of elevation change in the length of the canal, some up and some down. My first reaction as we traveled east in the canal was a shock. We could look down at the roofs of houses and barns that we passed because the canal was higher than the surrounding farmland. We went through many locks, 26 on the canal alone. A few of them remain in my memory.

The lock at Lockport is one of them. This set of locks has a 50' drop split between two locks of 25' each. Originally there were ten locks on this site. They had five 10' up-bound and five 10' downbound locks. The original locks on the north side are still kept as a tourist attraction and the ones on the south side were rebuilt as two 25' locks. I had visited Lockport once on an earlier car trip. I found all those little locks fascinating.

Another highlight was the lock at the town of Little Falls. As we entered this lock I right away noticed that there was no lower gate that I could see. This was a very deep lock and as the lock drained I finally saw the lower gate. This lock has a bulkhead that gets lifted overhead so a boat can leave. Somewhat scary going under that big chunk of steel.

We always tied up in a town at night as the skipper always wanted a good meal and a few drinks. We were there early in the sea-

## Remembering the Canals

### Part 1

By Mississippi Bob

son and the hours of operation were short. Many evenings we stopped early rather than go through a lock with no town close beyond it.

One evening we tied up really close to a lock so after a quick supper I went up and visited the lock. The lockman was still on duty and he gave me a grand tour of the place. I can not say enough about how well we were treated by all the lock personnel on this trip, that is, the New York State employees. We went through two Corps of Engineers locks on this trip and in both cases the service was rotten.

The New York guys seemed to be very happy to have a job, unlike many of my former co workers. I learned that most of them got moved off the locks in the winter and found other jobs like plowing snow for the highway department. They were all employed by the state transportation department so the change was easy for their employers.

As we got further east we passed close to the Finger Lakes but never saw any of them. We passed the Oswego River which is an outlet to Lake Ontario. I would get a chance see that on another trip. We started uphill again and came out to Oneida Lake. This lake is large enough that we spent a couple of hours crossing it. East of that we stopped at the town of Rome where we had dinner at the Savoy, candlelight and live piano music.

Further east we entered the Mohawk River and ran downstream on this river that had locks and dams very much like ours on the Mississippi, only on a smaller scale.

As we approached the Hudson River and the east end of the canal the river dumped into a fair sized lake. I believe it was a man-made reservoir because there were guard gates between it and the canal leading out of it. The guard gates are installed several places along the canal. Their purpose is to prevent an accidental draining of that part of the canal.

We traveled a very short distance in this section of canal to another lock. This lock seemed much bigger than anything else we had seen on the trip, dropping us down about 50'. When the lower gate opened we were looking into another lock. These are called flight locks. These locks share a gate so one can simply slide from one into the next. The last two miles of the eastern end of the canal has two sets of flight locks dropping us about 200'. When we left the last lock we had a very short section of canal and we were in the Hudson River.

I wondered how they could climb this steep hill in the early 1800s using limestone blocks to build lock walls and wooden timbers for the gates. I looked upriver from the terminus of the canal and spotted a wall built of limestone blocks that I assume was one of the original old locks. I couldn't talk the skipper into checking this out. We were headed to the Big Apple. I never got back to see this section of the old canal but I can visualize a series of probably 20 locks climbing the hill up to the canal above in the first two miles of the eastern end of the Erie Canal.

We headed downriver a short distance to a lock and dam on the Hudson. Like I said earlier, this was run by the Corps of Engineers and the service was rotten. We were still about a hundred miles from the ocean but we were bucking an incoming tide below the government lock and our over the ground speed was way down. We stopped for the night at the town of Hudson, New York. I came back from dinner that evening and doubled up all the moorings as the incoming tide was worrisome to me.

In the morning we headed downstream to Catskill, New York, on the tail end of the ebbing tide. We spent another day there getting the mast back up. Lowering and raising the mast is a necessary part of getting a sailboat through the canal. The dunnage required to haul the mast onboard can be purchased at one end and sold back at the other. Some skippers remove the mast and have it trucked overland to the other end.

The rest of the trip was time consuming. We spent several days in New Jersey looking at the Twin Towers. We finally headed up the coast, making stops at several places including Mystic and Newport. I had visited Mystic before a couple times but this time by boat on Memorial Day weekend was different. We also spent a couple days at Newport waiting to get the magnetic compass swung.

From Marion it was a non stop road trip in a Suburban to get home. Home always looks good after a month away. Next month Part 2 of my memories of the canals, the Trent Severn Waterway.

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I really can't believe I did that. Really can't. It didn't rain that late October day. Temps in the "high" 40s. Yesterday was supposed to usher in a few more weeks of an extended sailing season. Yeah, things were lookin' good. I had *Lady Bug* home from storage, cleaned out from the Movable Mess-about, finally, duties she performed way back in September, and ready to launch.

There's this delightful little lake just to the south of us with a delightful little mom and pop fishing resort on it. Albeit both mom and pop are the ages of my own kids. Anyhow, they allowed me to bring a succession of boats through their place and get them ready for further adventures back last spring. Actually, some of that "spring" outfitting was done with ice on the dock and snow on the beach. The lake has been there since the last ice age went north. One of those puddles scooped out and then shaped and filled in further over the eons, by a stream. Eloika Lake is pretty shallow and, as the summer progresses, weeds grow all the way to the surface. And that's when I have to go looking for deeper water. So the height of summer finds my fleet elsewhere, but spring and fall are quite, as I say, delightful.

Earlier this summer our area was assaulted by a pair of wind storms that would do an Oklahoma twister proud. The main paths were almost identical. Over about a 100 mile swath we had trees and houses and most anything else that provides wind resistance pretty well pummeled. Not, apparently, the storm of the century but the storm of several centuries.

Some of the trees felled by these storms were already getting big when Lewis and Clark walked and paddled through here! Huge Ponderosa in the 250-300-year-old range! Somehow Paul Bunyan missed some.

Jerry's Landing, on Eloika Lake, was at the center of the onslaught. Perhaps the "freight train" gathered even more energy coming across the lake. Dunno, but they, their neighbors and folks on downwind simply got hammered. These enormous trees were twisted off, uprooted and simply snapped like giant match sticks and thrown on to roofs, cars and off into the woods to tear more trees up. The twisted stump over Big Ole and *Lady Bug*, shown here, was the smallest and is all that remains of a clump of three or four really big trees. One of them was the tallest tree then still standing in the county.

Something on the order of 66 trees were ripped out of the ground on this three acre plot alone. That's a lot of logs to the mill. This is the firewood pile that remains. Some of these "leftovers" are nearly 4' across.

Anyhow, I had a personal sense of loss and a bit of guilt. Our own trees all survived. Some of them are in the 100-year-old neighborhood. Anyhow, I was there to rent a slip and keep my boat in the water until it starts getting a bit solid, on the top anyway.

## I Can't Believe!

By Dan Rogers

With that sobering intro, I went ahead and got *Lady Bug* ready to launch. Things went well, I seemed to remember where everything was supposed to go. The boat went into the water just fine, the rig went up just fine, the sails bent on and were ready in short order. Granted, the water gets a bit lower in the fall but the weeds were way, way fewer than when I fled for deeper waters back in June. What a grand day to go sailing! And what a great Indian summer adventure I had planned, another month of sailing, at least!

Off I went, tacking and gybing my way all over the lake. I found a couple of ancient Cup A Noodles cups and fired up the swing stove. Not another boat on the lake. If it wasn't for the chain saws still attacking downed tree trunks and hammers securing broken roofs and walls against the coming snow, it would have been almost silent out there.

After a few hours underway, I decided to circle a small island at the far end of the lake. That island "hadn't been there" last spring when the water was higher. I was sort of wondering about the bottom configuration and that sort of thing, but the muddy composition back at the end of the launch ramp had me feeling pretty smug. If we grounded, it oughta be with a gentle squish, nothing to worry about. Talk about famous last thoughts.

WHAM!! *Lady Bug* went from about 3 knots to zero in one heart breaking instant. The shudder was pretty dramatic but the sound of her keel hitting ROCKS was even more disturbing. Then the grinding started. We were not only aground, we were, apparently, quite firmly mounted on the back of some sort of granite sea monster. Both keel and rudder were taking the brunt of my navigational hubris. I left the sails up and tried to careen us off. Stuck solid.

I had to break the rudder hold down with a pair of vise grips and pry it off with the first wrench I could dig out of the toolbox. Rudder trailing like a broken wing, I managed to start us shudder bumping around in a sort of twirl. About all I managed to change was the part of the keel that was taking the worst of the drubbing from that granite sea monster who sleeps in a bed of bottom mud, about 2' below the surface, come fall. I had absolutely no idea he was there, honest, *Lady Bug*.

Of course, I hadn't brought a change of clothes. It's gonna be November next week. The idea of going over the side in waist deep water with nothing dry to put on later was kinda daunting. Meanwhile, the keel continued to sound like it was simply splitting apart. No rudder, boat bumping, twirling and grinding. About the only card still in the deck was to sally ship so I hung my aging frame over the water from the lee shrouds and finally got

her off, spinning downwind with sail still set and the next underwater monster someplace close by. No rudder. Kind of a sad state of affairs really.

I really could almost "see" that keel splayed open, the encapsulated ballast exposed. *Lady Bug* was justifiably cross with me. What had been one of those delightful moments we sailors search for, and cherish when we find, had been shattered just like the thousands of old growth pine trees no longer standing in the surrounding hills. Time to hyakko for the trailer! At least the motor had been tilted up when I did all that banging and crashing with the rudder.

Next problem: There was plenty of water right at the launch ramp, but in my haste to get the boat out of the water and to stop the flooding that surely must be progressing, I sort of missed the deep water. Yep, now *Lady Bug* was firmly stuck again, this time in the primordial ooze that sponsors such luxuriant weed growth when the water gets warm.

When simply winching her by a hawser tied to the bow eye yielded a broken roller arm on the trailer, I yielded to more desperate tactics. Can't believe I did that. I towed the boat over the mud bank with the line tied to the trailer by driving the van up the ramp. Talk about a hillbilly solution.

Let's see. Current total; busted rudder, probably major damage to the keel, busted 1/4" steel plate that holds a significant part of the trailer assembly, major strain to the bow eye as the boat was dragged bodily over a mud bank. And we're still not on the trailer. Fortunately, my years of engineering a single handed launch and recovery system and a stout two speed winch finally prevailed. I don't think sanity, or reason, was much in evidence, it was the sort of behavior normally associated with a bunch of guys with a case of beer and a metalflake bass boat perhaps. At least there was almost nobody watching. Thank God for small favors.

Now, instead of sailing well into winter *Lady Bug* will need keel repairs (albeit much less extensive than I imagined) and a further rudder modification to allow for releasing that big foil when it's supporting the weight of the boat and the weight of the hapless skipper, too, I suppose. No certainty I won't pull this stunt someplace, somewhere, again.

Anyhow, we're back on the trailer and back home now. It could have been a lot worse. I just can't believe I did that.



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It all started when I was four years old and I was pleading with RIOB (reputedly intelligent older brother) to read to me. Treating me to a well practiced scowl, he explained that as I already knew the story by heart it would be an exercise in futility. RIOB then showed me how each of the words I had memorized was represented by the printed symbols on the page and so now I could read and would never have to bother him again as long as I lived.

This prospect was sufficiently tempting that I tested his theory and it seemed to be accurate. The favored book was the account of some well dressed mice who were having a party and invited their friends to join them. I should explain that these murine festivities did not include Russian roulette and the only mood altering substances in evidence were tea and scones, nevertheless a good time was had by all.

My newfound ability now enabled me to embark on a new literary voyage and I now read a story about a group of different rodents who built a boat. These were clearly much larger animals but the species, if specified, is lost to me, but it does raise the question as to why books were written about rodents of any kind, but I digress. I remember little about the use to which the aforementioned boat was put, sailing away to foreign lands or finding gold at the end of marine rainbows perhaps, but what exciting images I studied in my childish glee of frames and futtocks and keels and knees and lapstrake planking and all manner of nautical delights. From these simple beginnings grew a fascination with boat construction. This led to my passion for building model boats which kept me busy for the next 11 years until I discovered girls, discussion of which is beyond the scope of this article.

I should now recount my experiences with full sized boats built by men and not rodents. When I was nine my father was suddenly bitten by the boating bug. Like Mr Toad, he would occasionally develop a passion for a new hobby, which then consumed him until it had run its course. He would return from the library with wheelbarrows full of books on all matters nautical and for some months fed his passion in this benign way. Alas, this peaceful phase came to an end and we were pitched headlong into the following events:

My father booked a week at a "Luxury Sailing Center on the River Yare," which advertised the use of "a selection of sail-

## Why Do I Love Boats?

By Malcolm Fifer

ing boats" and boasted of "easy access to the beautiful Norfolk Broads." The first mistake was failing to ascertain the accuracy of this description and the second was to book it at Easter, a time of year notorious in England for the unreliability of the weather. The reason it is unreliable is that one cannot predict if it will be cold and rainy or very cold and rainy.

We arrived late on a Friday evening and climbed into the outboard launch with our luggage as the hotel was not accessible by road, a bad sign! After a severe buffeting in some driving rain we docked at the hotel and the boat's captain, who we subsequently discovered was the proprietor of this establishment, stated, "Not to worry, we'll soon have you in front of a blazing fire." After checking in we discovered the blazing fire consisted of two small lumps of coal, only one of which was glowing slightly. Mother insisted we leave immediately but she was persuaded by RIOB to resurrect her flagging spirit of adventure.

The next day we made an early start and Father, RIOB and I went to choose from the selection of sailing boats, which were included in our stay. There were actually only two from which to choose and one of them had sunk at her moorings so we selected the other one. We wore as many clothes as we had brought and set off on our voyage of discovery. There were only four minor problems; it was raining, it was cold, there was no wind and the boat leaked like a sieve. I was given the task of bailing, which I did continuously. Father manned the helm, not a difficult task because we were not moving through the water and RIOB took charge of sail handling which, in the absence of any wind, was not demanding. Father was grumpy because he couldn't keep his pipe alight in the rain and I was unhappy because while the bailer was the only equipment on board that was new, inevitably some portion of the icy water ran over my hands while I was attempting to return it from whence it came.

After about two hours of this fun the river had carried us down to a small town and we were able to row over to the dock, provided for passing mariners, at the rear of a friendly pub. We sat by a roaring fire feasting on greasy food while Father consumed much brandy (to keep out the cold) and RIOB sampled the local ale. I was given lemonade. Eventually the publican persuaded us that we should be leaving soon as we had to row upstream to get back. Our roles now changed. The two men handled an oar each and my job now was to steer and bail, which I did alternately.

Our easy passage downriver contrasted sharply with our slow and painful movement in the opposite direction. After two hours it was dark and my blue, lifeless fingers lost their grip on the baler and it disappeared with a cheery plop. I reported this event and RIOB said, "You clot!" which I thought most unkind in the circumstances. Fortunately Father gave me his hat and I was able to bail with that, although it took two hands and exposed his balding head to the full fury of our famous weather. We finally arrived back at the hotel by which time the rain had turned to sleet but

we were too cold and tired to notice. Mother was frantic and a frank exchange of views ensued regarding boating in general and this hotel in particular. We left early the next day.

Having been a hapless victim of false advertising, Father decided that the purchase of a family boat would solve all our problems. After failing to obtain good advice, he bought a 16' racing dinghy with the ominous name of *Wildcat*. Many hours over the winter were spent developing an appreciation of the joys of wet and dry sanding and varnishing. I was pressed into service to share in these delights and from thence I suspect my hatred of varnish originated.

Notwithstanding the glacial pace of the work, by February the gleaming marvel was ready for a test sail and, although wiser counsel might suggest that waiting for the summer would be a better plan, Father's eagerness to try out his new toy prevailed. First some water had to be found and the River Trent beckoned. My fears that no one in the party had any sailing knowledge were put to rest by RIOB who assured us that he was an experienced sailor, so that took care of that!

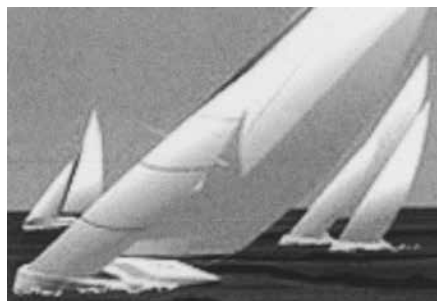
We approached the river across a muddy field and this delightful pastoral scene was enhanced by several disinterested cows, who had left souvenirs of their presence, and was decorated with a light dusting of fresh snow. The wind, I thought, was a little strong for a test sail but I was assured by RIOB that a stiff breeze was just what we needed. After a fairly successful launch enhanced by a demonstration of linguistic prowess by Father, in which he proved that he was no stranger to nautical terminology, I was lowered into the boat while Father had the good sense to remain on the bank to "keep your Mother company."

To my brother's credit we did reach the middle of the river before we capsized and I enjoyed my first experience of swimming in 38° water. I was instructed to swim around to the other side and stand on the centerboard to right the craft, but I know I was a disappointment to everyone because I failed to do this correctly. By this time the current had swept us downstream and fortunately brought us in front of the local sailing club. The club members were not there to sail, as there were not any idiots amongst their members, but the bar was doing a brisk trade.

Two hardy souls launched the rescue boat and I experienced a joy, which has never been exceeded in my long life, that of being pulled out of the water by two strong hands. My delight in the events was enhanced by the cheers of the assembled club members who, from the vantage point of the bar, had front row seats and it was universally agreed that they had not had so much fun since the local fire station burnt to the ground.

Father and Mother were now on the opposite side of the river so it was some time before they arrived after using a bridge to cross the water in the car, which I thought was a preferable method to the one recently used by RIOB and me. By the time they arrived I had already drunk my third cup of tea and had almost stopped shivering while RIOB was engaged in a debate with some of the club members about the dangers of a Chinese jibe, I thought a Chinese fire drill was a better description of events but, being the youngest member of the party, I kept my counsel on the matter. In the aftermath of these events *Wildcat* was sold and Father took up golf.

Which brings me back to my original question, why do I love boats? I've no idea!



Project: 18' aluminum boat. Goal: Cruise conversion. Scope: Buy, restore and modify. Budget: \$250 soup to nuts. It's a long story, but in retrospect I think I was being played a little bit.

There I was again at Bill's Boat Yard in Plainfield, Vermont. I didn't want a boat. I didn't need another boat. Or did I? Moot point, I had two kids in college who were bleeding me dry. I could not afford another boat. I was most certainly under no circumstances looking to buy another boat. I was only there because my good friend Bill Moulton was helping me put a floor in what I consider my first real man's boat, a well used and beat up 14' 1962 Grumman Jumbo.

She was an economical kick around boat that I bought because she was cheap, could take a low hp motor and was light to tow. I soon found I had more fun messing around with her than I did with the fancier turnkey boats I owned in the past. Her only fault was her major asset, she was small and had the typical limits for a hull her size. I liked her a lot and could go boating dozens of times a year for next to no money. Happy as I was though, I also wanted a second boat, a big hog, just for excursions and party outings. I ruled it out because of that money thing, which I lamented to Bill.

There is no dust on Bill. A good salesman can learn a lot from Bill. He lent me some copies of an interesting boating magazine he subscribed to, *Messing About in Boats*. I read them cover to cover. What I found was major, fellows such as Bolger, White, Payson and more had a perspective that a good size cruising boat could be something you don't often hear, affordable!

My world was shaken, you mean a cruiser didn't need a 500hp motor, vinyl graphics, sparkle bass boat paint and white shag carpeting? And did my eyes deceive me, is 17 years kind of a long time to finance a depreciating asset? My forefathers took long strides across the hills of Scotland to save shoe leather so budget is important to me. What a message. The amount of money you spend has no correlation to the boating enjoyment you get! They were speaking directly to me and I was picking up what they were putting down.

I read about some of the adventures that were being taken in smaller boats I have never seen before, like a Bolger Micro. I am a terrible woodworker but the seed for building one of those beauties somehow got in my head. I was thinking maybe I could do that! Broadening my search I found a plan from a fellow named Jim Michalak for a 16' stitch and glue rig called an AF4 Breve. It was not a fancy boat but due to its easy layout it could make a fun, low budget overnight cruiser. After all, I still needed something small enough to trailer with a 4-cylinder tow car. I could even power her with a small motor, say a 10hp, and not be ashamed. She was a cheap cruiser that could go forever on a tank of gas! It looked to be the easiest wood boat to make. My only concern was it had a flat hull. I wasn't sure how that would behave if one got caught with her on Lake Champlain if the wind kicked up.

So I mentioned my wild thought to Bill. It looked like he approved. But like I said, he is a crafty fellow and by a total random act, the next time I stopped by the boat yard there just happened to be exactly by the place I park, an old school aluminum Starcraft 18 footer. Bill bought it to salvage her and motor

## Can It Be Done?

By Johnny Mack



and trailer. Bill didn't know what to do with the boat as his restoration business leaned toward Whalers and such. He has a formula for restoring them that works nicely. He revitalizes them into economical, good looking solid boats that offer maximum fun for the buck. Fiberglass Bill can restore to like new condition. Aluminum? Well, at the time he didn't mess with it a lot.

The hull was in great shape structurally but had a gaggle of cosmetic snags. Bill surmised the time it would take to put a like new finish on her would end up costing more than a customer would be willing to pay. So when Bill doesn't know to do with a boat, he puts it right in the most prominent position in the boat yard to catch people like me.

I did the math. It occurred to me that I could get a very rugged, factory built aluminum hull for less money than I could buy the components to make a handmade wood boat from scratch. It also occurred to me that the same idea I had for a Cheap Charlie cruiser with the AF4 Breve would work on the Starcraft. I was thinking a tiller model 10hp, one of those those camping deals that look like a tent built on an army cot and a folding camping chair would be all I needed to cruise the world.

I asked what Bill's intentions were for the boat, he said he wasn't sure. I was bold enough to mention my idea and Bill actually appeared to have liked it. I couldn't pull the trigger at that point though. I still needed a chunk of change to buy the boat even at an advantageous price. Then there was plywood to redo the transom and floor. And the list went on and on, motor and trailer, et al. No, even the price of a budget configuration was adding up and I couldn't do it.

It was hard for me to get that idea out of my head and I think Bill suffered from the same situation. Finally Bill blurted out he thought I could get the entire boat completed for \$250. I didn't need to hear all the details before I jumped on it. In a nutshell Bill had a client who was looking for a small 4-stroke like one I owned and no longer wanted (it was a Yamaha 4hp left over from a Grumman Sport boat that I sold and is a tale unto itself). He would trade boat for motor which I thought was more than fair.

Bill was also very generous and said he would loan me one of his yard trailers for an indefinite time. There's more, he would float me the use of a spare 10hp he had kicking around for a cruise I fantasized of making,

the Erie Canal. Without prodding he proceeded to sweeten the pot by offering unfettered access to his magnificent used parts bin and a coveted spot in his workshop for the winter. Wait, how would I tow the darned thing? He said he would do it for gas.

So the next week she was in the shop as I got bit by the *MAIB* bug. Everything else I have done was bush league. This was the real deal and it was complicated by the \$250 challenge. I charted out a work order on jobs that needed to be done and rated them in order of importance. As with my philosophy in life, I immediately did the least critical item first, naming the boat. I found a couple good web pages that had listings of ribald monikers that put me on the floor. I was all set on one until I realized what might look good painted on a hull might give pause broadcasting on a radio for all to hear. I never had a marine radio but I envisioned a conversation to start like this, "Lockmaster Lock 11, this is *Barfing Dog* approaching from the north, ten minutes out."

I thought it better to name her something more dignified. I was thinking of the *African Queen*. I loved it when Bogie took off the tiller handle to make room so Hepburn could eat lunch on the afterdeck. I also thought about the constant tinkering and pounding he did to keep the steam engine running. Don't get me started when the propeller broke on the rapids. He said if he was at a dock he would write the company and they would send him a new one as most likely they would have one on the shelf as the boat was only 30 years old.

Yes sir, Bogie was a *Messing About in Boats* man and an optimist if there ever was one. I was set on the *African Queen* but out of nowhere Bill came up with the name of the *Phoenix*. The boat was going to the smelter and rose out of the ashes. It better defined the project and that was that.

I stripped the deck and removed the transom. Anybody can build a boat, the real talent is in the demolition. At least that is what I told myself. I made quite a mess but actually enjoyed the work. It made the bells in my head stop ringing.

Bill helped me cut the plywood for the deck and transom. I reassembled the transom myself. I found it no easy task to drill through holes on the outside aluminum, go through the new plywood core and terminate in the holes in the inside transom support braces. I made a fair number of extra holes and more than a few clean misses until I refined my technique. I filled the space between the hull and the deck with castoff trim pieces of rigid foam insulation I got for free from a construction site. Some of it was sitting in standing water for a fair amount of time and remained dry and light as a bone. Looked like good stuff to be in hull. I showed up to work on the *Phoenix* the next week and Bill finished the deck and had her all buttoned up.

The layout inside the boat took time to come together. There was no model to copy from so Bill and I had to make it up as we went along. Bill likes to keep things as simple as possible. I consider Rube Goldberg to be the best engineer in the history of the world. How did we get along? We learned a lot from each other. I learned from Bill the value of keeping things as simple as possible. And when Bill saw the designs I came up with, he was more convinced than ever his KISS theory was right.

After a bit of brainstorming we came up with the idea of built-in wooden benches down both sides of the boat. We built hatches

along them for gear storage. One of the hatches was to hold a good sized cooler. I packed the space surrounding it with foam board, hoping it would stretch more service out of each bag of ice.

Bill graciously donated a hard top frame from an old Bayliner he had cannibalized. The local roofing company helped me out by selling a few large sheets of scratched aluminum at a favorable price. We surmised it would be great lightweight hard top roofing material, which it was.



Bill reached into his magic bag of tricks and brought out a fabric camping tent enclosure, mesh bug screen and a full bow dodger with frame from past boats he stripped. A little bit of sewing and some snaps and we declared it good. We set up the bow dodger so it could be lowered and raised as needed. The solid fabric sides or bug screen could be easily put up depending on the situation. It made for an interesting color pattern but it was effective and budget friendly.

The design of a hard top, plywood benches and fabric sides were slick solutions to major engineering challenges, but it paled in comparison to the big question, where to put the porta potty, ah, er, head? Every option was rife with unintended consequences except one, the aft most position hidden under a hatch in the starboard bench. Then it occurred to me that, for instance while at dock, any soul requiring to use the device might feel more comfortable with a modicum of privacy. A common ordinary shower curtain "velcroed" to the hard top solved that issue. More than one person noticed a coincidentally placed rod holder and brought up the possibility of trolling and multitasking.

The bench forward of the helm was designated as the saloon. A portable two burner propane camping stove was the main appliance. A gas BBQ grill was added in case a pork tenderloin with my name on it was to be found in the cooler, which by happenstance was. A few plastic dishpans, a cutting board and a typical assortment of utensils creamed out the primitive but fully functional galley.

Now for the motor, ah, the motor. This is why this was meant to happen. Bill emailed a copy of a craigslist ad to me for a 14' Starcraft Holiday that had a nice 15hp electric start long shaft all set up with factory controls. The boat was in good shape, had a nice trailer and a ton of accessories. It was for a bargain price so I made a temporary break to my \$250 budget and loaned myself the money for the boat. Here is how it played out.

I swapped the trailer to Bill as it was an excellent fit for one of his 13' whalers. He permanently gave me his yard trailer the *Phoenix* was on in return. I sold its two sets of downriggers for a good chunk of change on craigslist and put the motor and controls on the *Phoenix*. I kept the Holiday hull as it was an upgrade compared to the Jumbo which I pegged for sale in the spring. With the proceeds of the Jumbo and the outriggers, I paid myself back and essentially got the motor, Bill's trailer and updated my kick around boat, all for free. An added bonus was the Holiday also had a very plush fisherman's seat along with a host of other goodies that would find a new home on the *Phoenix*.

One reason the Holiday was for sale at a bargain price was the motor was mismatched to the hull. The motor was a long shaft unit and the hull had a short shaft transom. It had an expensive looking solid aluminum aftermarket transom riser plate on it to make it work. I gave it to Bill. The motor was out of place on the Holiday but was perfect for the *Phoenix*. The short shaft motor from my Jumbo found its way in turn to the Holiday, where it fit perfectly.

The procurement of a remote operation motor and controls upgraded the *Phoenix* command center from a tiller to helm based layout. A simple plywood box was the ticket for mounting the steering wheel console. Bill had a used steering cable he threw in the mix. The control cables that were on the Holiday were the perfect length. Everything was coming together nicely and I was still in budget.

The seating position is critical. I put the seat on a cooler, moved it around to find the best position and added seat cushions to find the best height. I then just tweaked the plywood bench to those findings and bolted the seat down. My guess was dead on, very comfortable and needed no adjustments.

Everything was progressing nicely at this point but I have to stop and make one thing perfectly clear. I was proudly telling the gang at Bill's "Annual Winter Boat Party" that Bill and I were building a rather unique boat and we were having an incredible amount of fun doing so. Of course, someone politely asked me what kind of boat it was when out of nowhere his wife Kathie mortally wounded me. She told everyone that my new boat, the *Phoenix*, was a "trawlette." I had to immediately correct the ribald party goers that the *Phoenix* was not a trawlette or a cruisette or anything that ends with an "ette." The *Phoenix* is a great boat, a very dignified boat, a very manly boat, it is a, well, words escape me. Anyway, back to work.

I was going to use a borrowed army cot for a rack in the stateroom but Bill had a large sheet of thick foam that he took out of something that was a better choice. A good length of excess marine vinyl was sewn into a giant pillow case like cover to keep everything dry. The mattress fit nicely over the port bench and made a very comfortable arrangement with sleeping bag and pillow. Due to its size and unwieldy nature it was difficult to stow,

so it was to be left in place and was somehow never in the way.

I wanted to bring my bicycle and a trailer/wagon device to cart fuel from roadside stations to avoid traumatic marina prices. I could also then make easy jaunts to the grocery store for ice or just go for a joy ride. Bill found I could loosen the bike's handlebar bolt, twist the front wheel 90°, stand the bike on its rear tire and bungee cord everything to the aft hard top support post out of the way. It was an elegant system but in the excitement of launch day can you guess what I forgot?

The *Phoenix* had a very solid hull but her paint job suffered from age and dock rash. For reasons I don't know, the Starcraft Company took a nice looking hull and covered it with cheesy vinyl graphics. It was no easy task to sand that stuff off so I could roll on a more manly finish. If you manage a sales oriented company and would like to hire some top talent I recommend you recruit the crew that sells vinyl appliques to boat manufacturers, they must make a hell of a presentation.

Polyurethane oil gloss porch and deck enamel was the weapon of choice to refinish her, \$26 bills a gallon. I found the paint easy to apply with a foam roller, not offensive to smell and it stuck to everything, including patches of raw aluminum. In retrospect I prefer a boat finish that is not as shiny but the coat was tough and promised to be long wearing and easy to clean. Anyway, I'm thinking a few years of use and a slew of scuff marks will tone it down to where I want it. Regardless, I don't see anything out there that will unseat this paint as my go to finish.

I am proud to say that I became a master at covering up holes. The previous owner put plenty of them in the gunnels for mounting downriggers and other fishing paraphernalia. The easiest, cheapest and most satisfactory approach was to cover, conceal or mount something else in the holes and call it a modification. It would be a fool's errand to try to repair flaws in aluminum to showroom condition.

One of the great things about not having a boat I am making payments on is that it is a guilt free decision to customize it. I think the best boats have shark teeth on them. I always thought that. To the rescue, enter Andrew Field, prominent attorney, well known fisherman and my father-in-law. Andy was also regarded by all that knew him as being an accomplished artist. But nobody suspected he had a latent natural talent for painting sharks teeth, well, nobody but me. Thank you Andy, you nailed it, they are exactly what I hoped for.

I scrounged some excellent accouterments from Bill's used parts bin. A partial list of the treasures I absconded with were a bow light, anchor light, trumpet horn, search light, four cleats (cast aluminum ones made back in the day), two 18gal fiberglass gas tanks with fittings, a bilge pump with float switch, a swim platform with ladder, a porta potty, anchor with chain rode, a half dozen fenders, a solid brass fuel filter, a pump for the water cannon (you never know when one will be needed) and the projects requirement of electrical wire and anchor line.

From my own meager stock I added the fish finder from the Holiday. I threw in an electric trolling motor I had on hand as I wanted for an emergency maneuvering capability if the engine failed. I bought fuses, switches, a 12v outlet and a set of automotive fog lights in case I had to dock at night.

When the ice went out, I took her for a test run on wild and wooly Marshfield Reservoir. The *Phoenix* was well balanced, the motor started right up and worked great under all loads, the floor plan was easy to move around in and the hull remained dry as a bone. I pronounced her fit for service and scheduled a cruise to ply the waters of the Erie Canal.

She worked beyond expectations. She was very stable, easy to maneuver and had a liveable setup, in a campish sort of way, for any duration cruise I could make in my allotted vacation time. Her fuel use was about a gallon an hour at a cruising speed of 5-9mph. I thought the motor would benefit by a larger, slower moving prop but it was nonetheless a sweet running machine and never missed so much as a beat.

To my horror the *Phoenix* had a leak the entire cruise that wasn't there during shake-down. The bilge pump came on every four hours and would run for 30 seconds. I think I know what happened. When I got back from the test at Marshfield Reservoir, someone sneaked into Bill's shop, drilled three holes below the waterline and mounted my fish finder's transducer. The lowlife vandal didn't even seal it properly against water intrusion. I am still trying to find who did it. I don't think anyone who plays such a prank is very mature, do you?

After the trip, it was back to the draw-board to improve a few issues. The cooler

did not meet expectations. It was a challenge keeping everything cold. Anything above the melt water got warm and yuckie, anything below got slimy and yuckie. I most certainly would have perished if not for a stash of canned beverages I had on hand for such emergencies. I'm thinking a refrigerator will have to be shoehorned in during dry dock for improved chow provisioning.

Gear storage: I have found the addition of small storage bins here and there would be handy. I constantly fumbled for items such as camera, knife, cell phone, canal pass, flashlight, trash can, etc. Adding a compartment to keep charts organized and dry would also be time well spent.

I put a trumped up bow anchor winch on the boat for anchoring situations. It turned out too funky, even for me. I am going to replace that with an anchor ball type of system. It might be a surprise coming from me, but I'm beginning to think overnight anchoring has to be simple and bulletproof.

Finally, my personal gear. I brought way too much junk, a good amount of which got underfoot. Instead of adding more storage space, I need to make a brutal culling of unused items.

You might want to know by now if I met my \$250 budget. Ahhh, er, no. Low cost essentials like sandpaper, drill bits, light bulbs and wire connectors brought me to the edge. Medium priced things, plywood, trailer tires and a water pump impeller

pushed me over. Big ticket items like beverages for Bill stuck a fork in my goal and called it done. I solved that issue though. I didn't have a lot of disposable income for this project, so I plugged a cash leak and repurposed it to the boat. I found I couldn't watch cable TV and work on the *Phoenix* the same time. I kicked the cable to the curb and never missed it.

Bottom line, the enjoyment factor was through the roof and was worth so much more than any money I spent. Bill was true to his word and didn't even wince when I took all his best stuff. I thought the pressure to stay on budget would be stifling but I found it just the opposite. It was just pure fun trying to get such a hodgepodge of things to fit together and work.

My thanks to Bill for offering me the use of his shop, his technical assistance and putting up with the greedy and viscious assault I made to his spare parts bin. And Kathie, thank you too for putting up with me during this project. I forgive you for calling the *Phoenix* a trawlette, she's a "Fully Cup Holdered, Low Impact, All Purpose, Expeditionary Slow Cruiser."





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21st century cruising sailing canoe for savvy sailors  
Photo by Bill Ling

# Chain Saw Road Trip

## An In-kind Donation of Hackmatack

Reprinted from  
*Maine's First Ship Newsletter* (mfship.org)

Peter and Lorraine Ristano of New Portland, Maine, and proud grandparents of a summer program student, stopped by the boatshed one day with an offer of donated hackmatack for ship's knees. With a pile of stumps staged for our TLC, the trek began under clearing skies. By the time we reached the overwhelming hospitality of New Portland the day cleared and the work began in earnest. A huge amount of work had already been done by pulling the trees from the swamp but that was just the beginning.

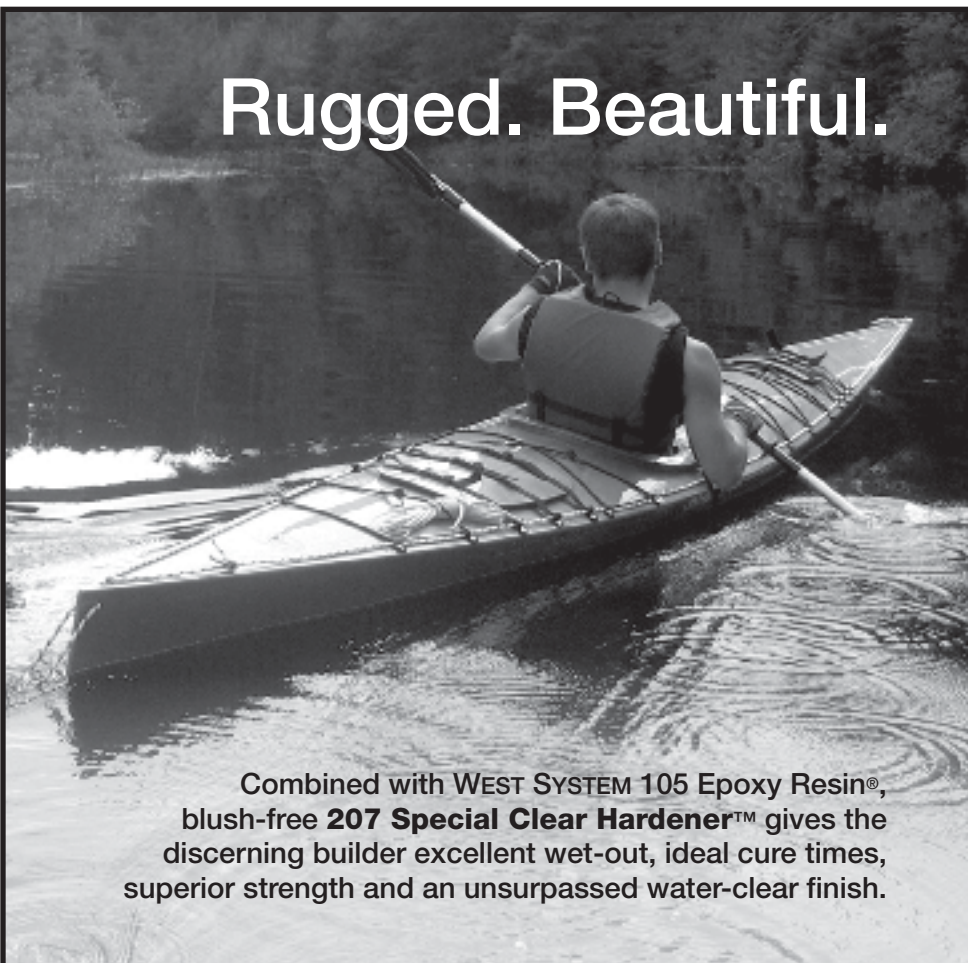
Pete brought all of his equipment to the work site, too. Tractor, power sprayer, chainsaws, axes, chains and a handy ATV to haul it all around. We could not have got the job done without this help from Pete. Sadly the lack of this level of help has forced us to decline past donations of wood due to our limited resources.

After a lunch of pizza and ice cold drinks, thoughtfully provided by Lorraine, it was back to work with every saw we could lay hands on. Pete's friend and stump puller John Bertl took turns with Tim and Jeremy worrying the knee down to a liftable load then Pete heroically finished the stopping cuts needed to hack down this saw swallowing beast of a knee. We hauled four knees off to Bath and a good night's sleep was had by all! Profoundest thanks to Pete and Lorraine for your generous gift and hours of work!





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This an old aviation saying about a pilot who died. I don't know its origin but it suites this following story. My friend Bob Sullivan enjoyed flying and gliding throughout his life and was an avid kayaker, sailor, canoeist and environmentalist. Along with John Lamb, Bob was instrumental in the actions that led to the rescue of the Illinois and Michigan Canal. He was a frequent paddler at the Skokie lagoons just north of Chicago for the past two decades.

Bob and I taught aviation courses at Lewis University just outside Chicago and flew each others planes on and off for 30 years. He was a flight instructor and passed on some flying tips that kept me flying safely. When he retired, he sold his plane and moved north near the Skokie lagoons.

He called me up after I had to sell my plane due to medical problems and invited me to paddle with him in the lagoons. I figured it was time to put down the propeller and pick up the paddle. These lagoons were built in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps. They did a great job. The Chicago River runs through them before flowing south into downtown Chicago. Bob was impressed by the large collection of migratory birds passing by in the spring and fall.

I, too, was impressed by the clever design of islands and accessible launch facilities that made paddling easy. For about the last five years we met and paddled there. His favorite boat was the Pokeboat, an open fiberglass kayak. He tied it to his car roof for transport. I paddled my self built stick frame and Dacron lightweight kayak and carried it in my van.

Bob was my mentor, being ten years older than me. He encouraged me to build my next boat of wood, which I did. I decorated it with the profile of a red fox in honor of a deceased environmentalist whose efforts helped clean up the Fox River that I sometimes paddle. Bob approved of my new design after I had to mount an extra skeg on the stern to make it track straight. It only weighed 25lbs and fit in my van. He encouraged me to add a sail to an old wooden boat I had built for fishing. It worked but I'm still experimenting with that one. Bob encouraged me to write about paddling adventures in *MAIB*.

Bob guided me around the coves, islands and sloughs of the lagoons. As time slid by, he began having shoulder trouble. That made getting out of the kayaks tougher painwise. To try and help him get out of kayaks unaided, I experimented with an "Easy-out Ramp" for my little kayak (see sidebar) with which he would just use his legs to help slide himself out and onto the rear deck.



Bob in my small kayak with white "assist rail" hanging out.

I gave him full use of my kayak after he had to sell his Pokeboat when he moved into a condo, but it had to be cartopped because it

## "Bob Sullivan Went West"

By Bob McAuley



Two Bobs about 1980, Bob Sullivan on right, Bob McAuley on left in front of Sullivan's favorite aircraft, a 7AC Champ.

wouldn't fit into his SUV. That presented the same problem of using his shoulders so he gave it back after trying it on the water. He then switched to rental canoes at the livery on Tower Road at the lagoons.

He encouraged me to explore a slough he discovered back in the lagoons that he named "Sullivan's Slough." He had paddled back there enjoying many hours of solitude watching feeding deer ducks, goose hawks, herons and kingfishers surrounded by quiet and white water lilies. He wished to go back but it required paddling and his shoulders said "NO." Hauling a rental canoe back there would involve a tricky portage of the heavy canoe. I promised to paddle it someday.



Bob with his "Sullivan's Slough" in the background.

That day came last spring when my son Mike, Bob and I parked at the jump off spot just above the dam with our "Take-A-Part" kayaks. I had created a wooden sign labeled "Sullivan's Slough" and had planned to plant it somewhere up in his slough. I took pictures at the bank and Bob waved us goodbye from the bank. We paddled out into the slough but failed to find a good spot to plant the sign. A mudflat would have been fine but all was dense vegetation. We paddled back and would try again from the east side sometime.

Weeks later Bob and I met at the livery and he rented a canoe. We mounted his electric motor and with help getting in, launched on the water again. He piloted us all around



My son Mike prepares to launch my small kayak for Bob (on left).



Mike (with sign as backrest) prepares to go looking for a proper site for the sign.

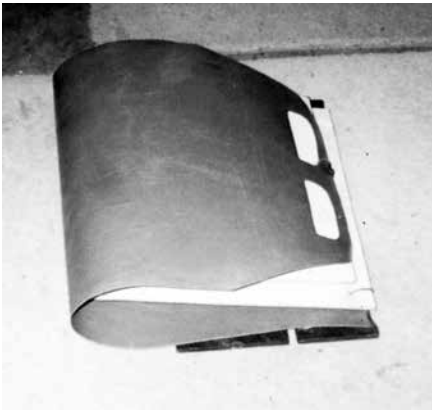
the late summer waters. It was sunny and hot but we were cool and the envy of those sweating kayakers we breezed by! It was a very pleasant ride and oh, so quiet! No noisy outboard, the quiet canoe just cut vee's in the smooth warm water. I didn't realize that that would be my last ride with him. Bob was smiling and pleased as he piloted his craft through a nature wonderland on a perfect sunny day.

We returned the canoe and packed his motor back in his SUV. I trailed him to McDonalds and, as we dined, we planned our next adventure. I was to bring Mike and my 9' fiberglass outrigger canoe with my electric motor up to the lagoons. Bob would rent a canoe and mount his electric motor on it. We would then race our canoes around the big island to see who bought lunch. That was a take off on a similar race we had 30 years ago between our two airplanes. He won that one!

But Bob suddenly died before we would race again. Bob, I still have that sign to plant.



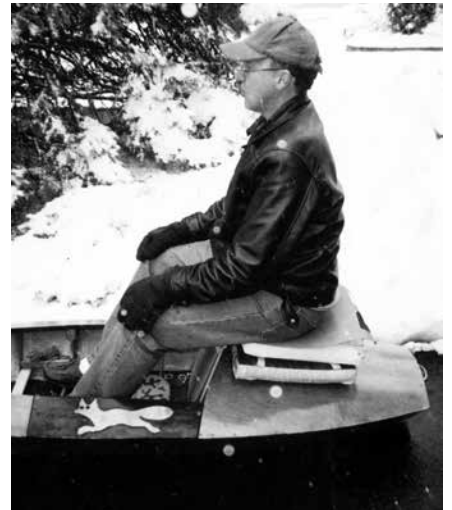
## Easyout Ramp Details



Easyout Ramp folded up.



Small wooden kayak ready for Easyout Ramp installation.



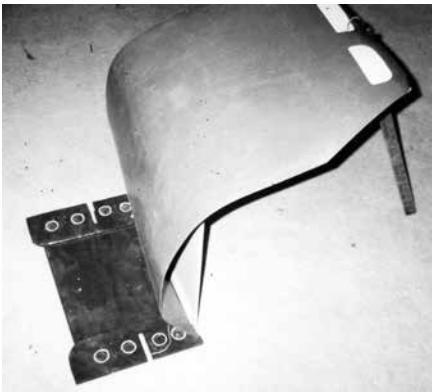
Mike demonstrates three stage Easyout Ramp operation.



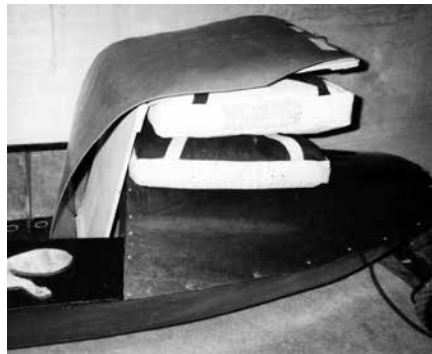
Easyout Ramp extended for installation into kayak.



Easyout Ramp installed in kayak.

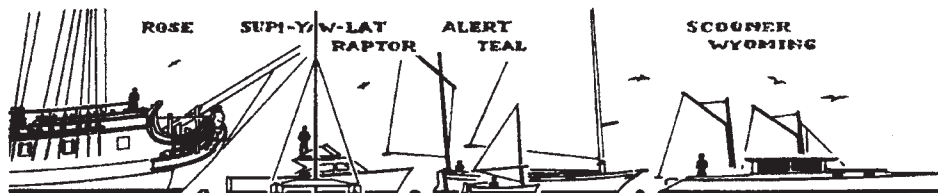


Brown base locks into kayak.



Blue plastic back slide extended over kayak's rear deck.





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Yes, another really short and easy one in this issue. And a fairly dirty little sketch at that. Its brevity actually reminds me of the years before my advent in Phil's life, when he'd offer an unpredictable mix of articles, from fully designed plans, essentially shovel ready, a term not much in use then, all the way to even just pencil sketches with a few comments. Of course, they were actually still cleaner than this!

At any rate, this is based on the hull we know from the December issue, powered by the same industrial three cylinder 45/55hp Diesel engine driving a C configuration sail-drive with a 16" three bladed prop, the latter this time actually with appropriate clearances to the skeg. As a launch, we'd want to swing a good sized alternator on that modest Diesel for all sorts of lighting and entertainment demands, holographic disco balls anyone? But even if there were such, where would we match that ambition with glam Saturday Night movements anywhere on this lean hull?!

Drop windows seem a no brainer here, perhaps with framed bug-screens hinged inwards and upwards. Of course, it only takes one open door fore or aft to ruin that fond hope during that sunset cruise into the pretty, pretty empire of greenheads, no see ums that will get ya in that unspeakable way, even if

## Phil Bolger & Friends on Design

### Another Preliminary Study for "Windermere-40" Model 4 "Diesel Launch"

40'3" x 8'6" x 2'6" x 1x 45HP Diesel

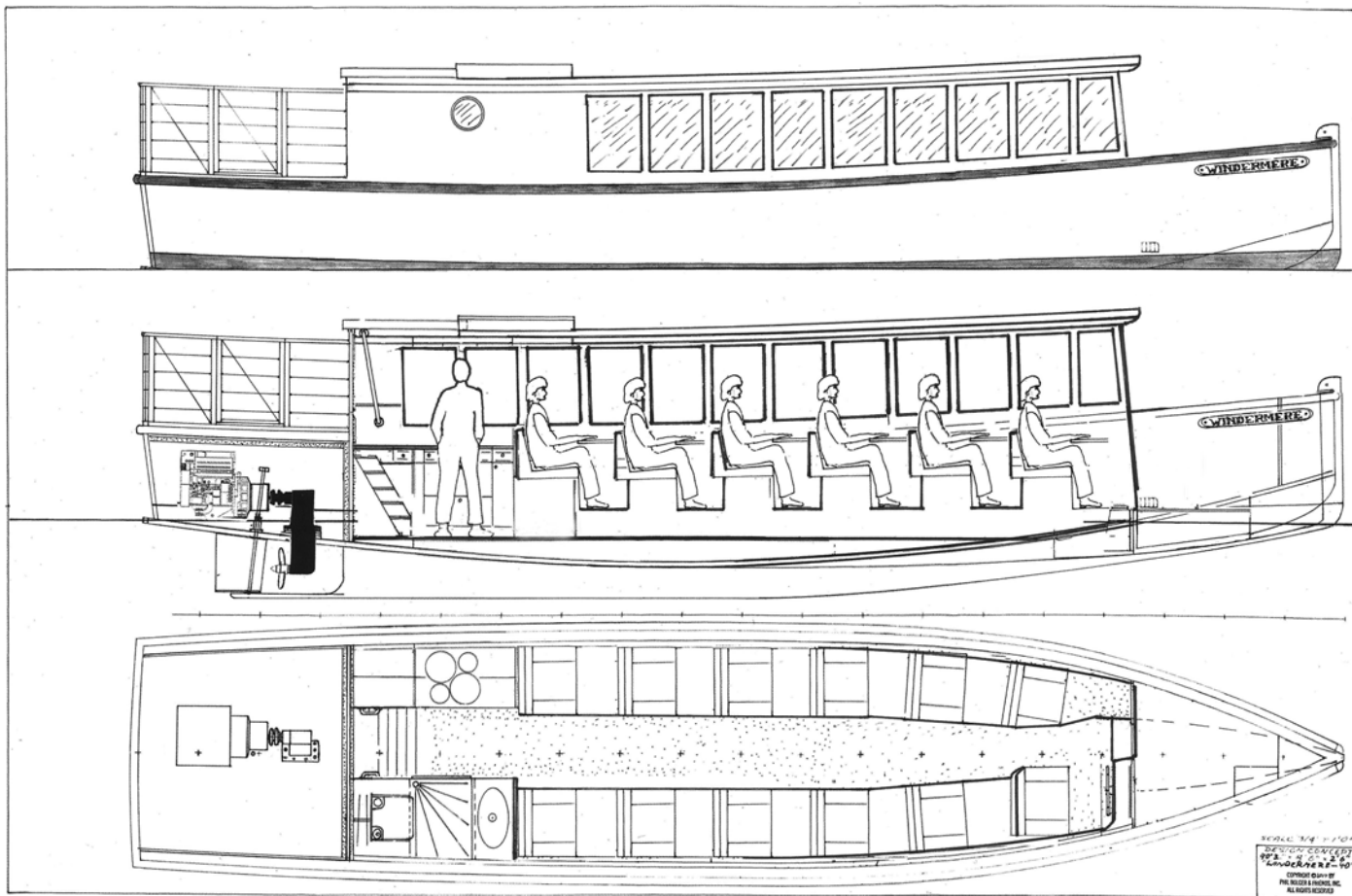
you could fend off the horseflies from taking off with pieces of your living flesh.

Tourist duty, or just mundane hauling commuters across a waterway where even Bridges to Nowhere will only get you wet. Eleven seats in the house, with more possible on the stern deck, plus standing room to add up the density. Then however you may want to plan ahead if you want to make it to the head on time. Wheelchair accessibility would be a challenge, but not totally inconceivable with enough rearranging of her afterdeck, companionway and throwing out one or two of those seats, perhaps just folding them up would do better. Don't tell me that there are other regs waiting to crush Model-4 as a commercial duty proposition!

As discussed before, the Diesel can produce a fair bit of heat for cooler climes and seasons. And there is the option of diesel fueled central heat that keeps the interior toasty without crankshaft rpms and staccato on the ears. In summer duty the engine might be big enough to support an AC system as well. Heck, Phil and I counted on just one 12,000btu window hung AC unit to keep the whole (super insulated) two story house at 75° in the sporadic Gloucester heat wave. And that unit drew the equivalent of around 2hp. With that little galley put to good use, I could see piezo electric drink holders all around to keep the spritz cool.

With her lean length the Diesel, and her portability, the type could do miserly duty locally or actually running a good distance. And if business wanes seasonally, the trailer would haul her to a more lucrative spot. But wherever she'd work for commerce, in yacht club duty, as a plain community owned transit on a lake somewhere, I'd have no clue on how to prepare oneself for the unexpected appearance for that private charter sight seeing with you by the "how many in your party(?)" Clone Sisters.

Not sure yet either on the next piece for the mid winter issue here in New England.



I recently returned from three weeks in Kenya, where I had the opportunity to go out on two boat excursions. The first was on Lake Victoria, the wildlife, mammals, reptiles and especially birds were abundant and our guide and captain, James and George, were knowledgeable. It was interesting to look closely at the craft we were traveling in. Our boat, *Imanisafari*, was of carvel construction with a very sturdy prow (Picture 1). The seams inside were covered with thin strips of metal. The seats were boards with backrests upholstered in naugahyde tacked in place (Picture 2). It had a transom stern, equipped with a Yamaha Enduro 15hp outboard.

During the tour we saw sailing boats, too, used for fishing, usually with nets. These were carvel planked double enders with lateen rigs with auxiliary paddles or poles. The sails were often ragged and patched, but carefully made and shaped (Picture 3). They sailed beautifully, making good speed in very light air, and when the yards were squared for downwind legs, they tracked well with no sign of pitching or rolling.

## Messing About in Kenyan Boats

By Carol A. Jones

We landed at a fish market on the banks of the lake where the dhows land to unload their catch and the ladies on the beach fry them up. Bill and I shared one, a delicious Nile perch fresh off the wood stove. The beach was full of storks, herons and hammerkops, benefiting from the fish cleaning operations.

*Imanisafari* had a roof over the seats, of wood construction, and we saw a larger version filled with kids on a class trip (Picture 4). We saw several smaller double enders, also carvel, propelled with poles (Picture 5). The helmsman's use of the pole was graceful and efficient, propelling the boat nicely even in a chop. The bows had curved pieces of wood protruding up from the water used to aid in setting the nets. We also saw several passenger boats with "dragontail" outboards that has the propellers on the end of long shafts that extended way aft

the stern (Picture 6). On all types of craft there were very nice hand painted graphics on the hull, depictions of ibis, hammerkops or hippos, which are prominently present in the lake.

Several weeks later, on Lake Naivasha, we took another nature tour with an excellent captain and guide, Joseph. He skillfully found and pointed out to us many birds that we had been hoping to see, kingfishers, spoonbilled storks and the African fish eagle. His boat was quite different from the ones on Lake Victoria. It was fiberglass, built in Kenya and cost about \$2500 US (Pictures 7 and 8). It was long and narrow, 25'x5 1/2', powered by the ubiquitous Yamaha Enduro 15 and left no perceptible wake at cruising speed. The plastic seats were comfortable (Picture 9) and the boat was dry.

Kenya had many friendly, knowledgeable people who love the opportunity to share the culture and wildlife of their country with us. We learned so much, got wonderful photos and enjoyed our contact with local people. Animal lovers, botanists and boat lovers will find lots to look at and absorb and lots of helpful guidance in Kenya, well worth a trip.



Picture 1



Picture 4



Picture 2



Picture 3



Picture 5



Picture 6



Picture 7

Picture 8



Picture 9



### Sjogin

Sjogin is a small traditional Scandinavian workboat (I assume that she's a koster type) that we sail in the north end of Barnegat Bay in New Jersey. We keep her in an old fashioned boatyard, David Beaton and Sons, in West Mantoloking, near our home. She seems to be modeled on a typical clinker (lapstrake) Swedish inshore fishing boat and not one of the more refined carvel types. Sjogin is 22' LOA x 8' beam and draws about 2'9". She has a long shallow keel. Also, she's never had an engine. I carry a sweep to scull when needed but otherwise use whatever wind's available to get in and out of her slip.



As far as we know, Sjogin was built in southern New Jersey in 1961 by a gentlemen named Gullen. We have no further details of her builder or designer. While she has workboat roots, her proportions and details suggest she was drawn by a well practiced eye.



## Sjogin's Story

By Russ Manheim  
Hove to off Swan Point (Blog)

While Sjogin is not a New Jersey design, she was born and raised in the state and her undeniable beauty has earned her a page of her own. She has pulled the heartstrings of many and is the topic of several threads on the *WoodenBoat* Forum. Forumite Rod Brink drummed up interest on the forum, contacted several well known designers and finally contracted with world renowned boat designer and builder, Paul Gartside, to have him draw the original Sjogin's lines and also rework plans for glued lap/clinker plywood, strip planked/cold molded and traditional construction methods. Paul also drew several sail plans: Gaff sloop, Bermuda sloop, Gaff yawl and Bermuda yawl.



### Sjogin and Hurricane Sandy

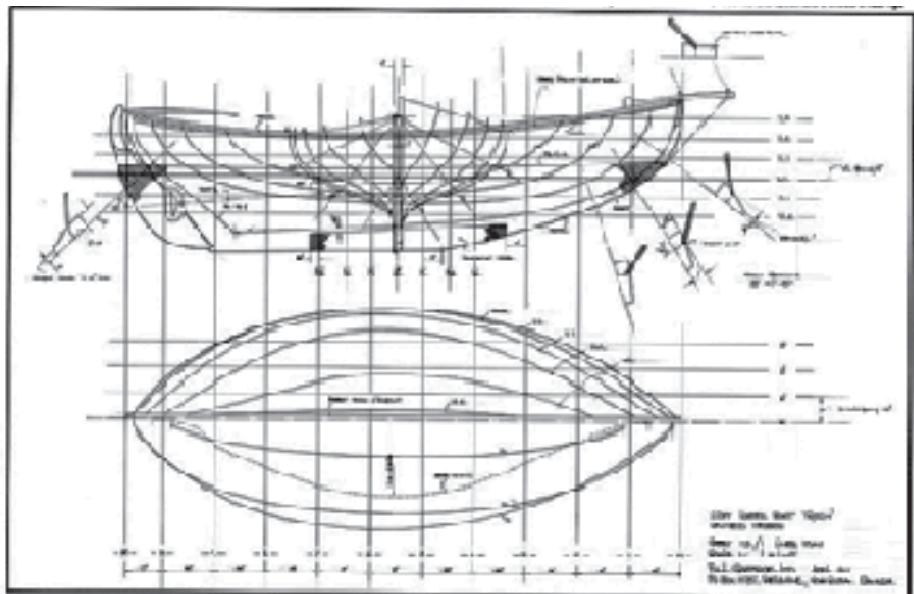
She went down, but she came back up. She'll be back in sailing shape soon.

## Paul Gartside Discusses his Sjogin II Plans

What I would say about the Sjogin plan is that I have no difficulty understanding why so many people are drawn to it, it's a beautiful model. It's a sweet little boat, ideal for week-ends aboard or just daysailing. In reworking it I made several changes from the original boat. The keel is a little deeper to clean up the profile, in the original the ballast casting is not faired into the wood keel very well. It will also give it a better chance to windward.

I have moved the rig forward and set the forestay off a short bowsprit on all four rig options. My sense is the boat must carry a good bit of weather helm on the wind as is, the beamy boats are always trying to round up as they heel. Hopefully the change will balance her a little better. Of the four rig options, I would be inclined to use one of the gaff rigs, the yawl is my preference, mostly because it is so much easier to make all the components oneself.

I drew the main plan for clinker plywood because a majority of the sponsoring group requested that. However, for a glued option, my preference would be the triple skin method included in the plan set. It avoids the tricky ethical questions around the use of tropical hardwood plywood and makes it easier to use local material. It is also probably the most economical in terms of material cost. The boat needs an auxiliary of some, even though the original is engineless. An



outboard is a bad match for a double ender so I added a small diesel to her. Even if an engine is not installed, my recommendation would be to put a stern tube in at the time of building regardless. It will increase the value and resale potential for little additional cost.

There has been interest expressed in further variations of this hull. I talked to Rod Brink yesterday about an 18' trailerable version and we agreed that if he could round up

an interested group again, I would undertake it on a similar basis. Since then I have had a couple of expressions of interest in a 26' version, which might be a very nice cruiser. So we'll see. We are not at the end of the Sjogin saga by any means.

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April 19, 2012, dawned bright and sunny. A beautiful spring day to begin building a boat, and that is exactly what I did. Early on that Thursday morning I began building the new apple of my eye, a Deer Isle Koster. I first learned about this boat in *WoodenBoat* magazine's 2011 "Small Boats" issue. At the time I was looking for a design that I had not tried before. The Koster seemed to fit the bill.

The Deer Isle Koster was designed by Bruce Elfstrom of East Haddam, Connecticut, in 2011 (Google Building, Designing and Using Small Boats on the Coast of Maine). If this name sounds familiar, it is, because Bruce founded the Wooden Boat Rescue Foundation ([www.woodenboatrescue.org](http://www.woodenboatrescue.org)). Bruce is a novice boat designer of Norwegian and Swedish descent. He has two daughters who enjoy sailing. He was looking for a boat that would be safe and fun for them to sail with good performance. Additionally, he wanted the boat to be light, rowable, beautiful and traditional with a glued lap plywood hull. A hull that would be stable. He also wanted a simple rig that would provide safe but adequate power. His design worked out to have a little bit of a lot of different boats in it.



All set to get started.

He describes it as a Raider boat with a little bit of Danish Jolle and a Swedish Koster with Beetle Cat mixed in. This sounded like something I might be interested in. Safe, simple and fun. After designing the boat Bruce sent off the plans to boat builder Eric Friberg in Washington. Bruce had two of the boats built, one for each daughter. What a dad! The boats were completed and sent to Deer Isle, Maine, where Bruce's family has a summer place. The boats sailed really well but as with any new design had to be tweaked a bit. At this point he hooked up with boat builder Clint Chase of Portland, Maine. The two ironed out the problems and finalized the plans. A kit was designed by Clint and on March 16, 2012, it was delivered to my garage (half of which is my boat shop).

The boat is glued lap construction of okume plywood. Mahogany, oak, Douglas fir and white cedar were additionally used. The rig is a balanced lug with a small jib. The jib is set on a small roller furler for ease. The mast is designed to be a bird's mouth type but mine was built solid.

The particulars for the boat are as follows. LOA: 14'. LWL: 13'4". Beam: 5'3". Draft: Board up 6", board down 3'8". Weight: 200lbs. Sail area: Main 101sf, jib 20sf.

When I first started building the boat I figured that it would take approximately 18 months for me to build. Unfortunately life got in the way and construction took 12 months longer than expected. On September 28, 2014, two years and five months after that beautiful spring day in 2012, I finished the Koster and named it *Hooligan*.

## Hooligan

By Frank Stauss  
Reprinted from *The Mainsheet*  
Newsletter of the Delaware River  
Chapter TSCA



A look inside.

## Winter Months at the Delaware River Chapter TSCA

By Frank Stauss

The winter months bring a different type of boating at our TSCA Chapter. Just because we are not out on the water doesn't mean we can't mess around with small boats. We'd like to invite interested readers in our Delaware River region to attend our TSCA meetings this winter. The clubhouse at the Liberty Sailing Club has heat. Good heat. We can actually take off our coats and mittens. We meet on the second Monday of each month at the Liberty Sailing Club, 303 North Front St, Philadelphia. Come out for the good times, great speakers, interesting topics and a chance to visit with friends who have the same interest as you.

We will again be participating in the Wood Working Show in New Jersey again in 2015. Last year's participation was a great success. If you are interested in lending a hand we'd welcome it. You won't be sorry.

To find out more about us google Delaware River Chapter TSCA.

During this past summer, as the build neared its end, I was looking forward to the upcoming 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Mid Atlantic Small Craft Festival held at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St Michaels Maryland. The event was to be held October 3-5. I wanted to enter *Hooligan* into the judging competition. Luckily I finished just in time.

The week before the MASCF I took *Hooligan* to Union Lake for her first splash. She floated (always a good sign) and did not leak (always a really good sign). *Hooligan*, when not sailing, is powered by oars. The first item on my list after making sure she floated and did not leak was to see how she rowed. No problem there. She rowed fine. I brought her back to shore and began rigging her for sail. While doing this the wind picked up considerably. During the rigging I found that the main sheet was too thick to run freely through the blocks. Because of the stuck main sheet and the now high winds I decided to give up on the sailing trial and pulled her out of the water. Weather and other obligations kept *Hooligan* out of the water the rest of the week. She would make it to St Michaels but would remain on the hard.



*Hooligan* on the hard.

I entered *Hooligan* in the kit category of the judging competition and she did very well, scoring a first place ribbon. Additionally she won the coveted People's Choice Award. I was very grateful and honored to win these awards.

Back home in the Garden State the plan was to sail *Hooligan* and see how she did. Unfortunately, weather and family obligations prevented this from taking place. *Hooligan* was wrapped up under two heavy tarps and put away for the season. Sea trials will have to commence in the spring of 2015. I hope it's a short winter!

## Important Meeting Notice

The Delaware River Chapter of the Traditional Small Craft Association has changed its meeting night and meeting location!!! We now meet on the second Monday of each month. Our new meeting location will be at the LIBERTY SAILING CLUB, 303 NORTH FRONT ST, PHILADELPHIA, PA. Interested small boat enthusiasts are welcome to attend.

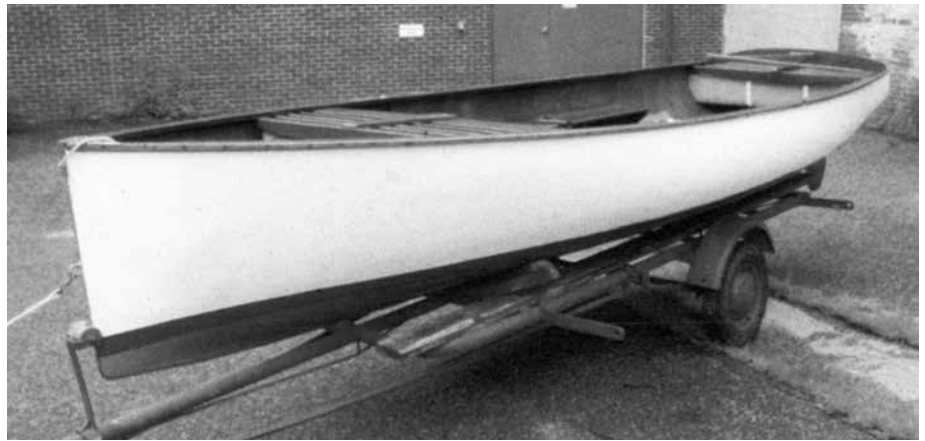
# Thistle #8 to Permanent Collection at Mystic Seaport Museum

By Peter Dickinson  
Mystic Seaport Photos

I sailed Thistles in Winnetka (Illinois) from 1979 to 1999 when, for various and sundry reasons, I moved on to other classes and eventually to a 35' Bruce Kirby designed sloop which I now sail from Guilford Connecticut. When we moved to Connecticut I made arrangements to volunteer at the Mystic Seaport Museum and was assigned to work on the Watercraft Collection, an assemblage of about 450 smaller boats, row, paddle, power and sail, maintained as a research and reference collection in an old velvet mill across the street from the main campus of the Seaport.

This collection is not open to the public, although it can be visited by appointment. The boats in the collection are intentionally maintained in the condition in which they arrived at Mystic, rather than being restored and in that process becoming less original. Among the many fascinating items in this collection are Lightning #1, Laser #0, Stars #7 and #202, a Comet, a Snipe, a Blue Jay, an International 14 and an International 12, among many others. But there was no Thistle, a glaring deficiency in my mind. It also seemed obvious that we should be looking for one of the original hot molded wood boats.

I called the Thistle Class Secretary and persuaded her to give me the names and contact information on Thistles #1 through #10, all still very much alive except for #4 that was apparently destroyed some years ago. I naturally contacted the owner of Thistle #1 but learned that in spite of his purchase of a fiberglass boat, he was working on #1 with the objective of racing her again in the near future. I also contacted Elmer Richards who, among other Thistles, owns #9. Elmer explained that #9 was still being actively raced up in the Adirondacks and was therefore not available. But my inquiry got Elmer excited about the search and he also put out feelers to his long list of Thistle friends. We agreed that we should attempt to secure one of the oldest Thistles.



Eventually we contacted Jim Nessa of St Paul, Minnesota, the owner of #8. Jim indicated that he would be willing to donate #8 to Mystic Seaport, but that we would need to make arrangements to pick her up since his new car didn't have a trailer hitch. After many false starts attempting to persuade others to do the work bringing this boat to Mystic, Elmer and I decided to do it ourselves. Elmer got his van ready for the trip and we headed out from Elmer's house in Ossining New York, on July 8 of last year. We arrived at the Nessas' summer cottage on a lake in Elysian in rural southern Minnesota. Jim had bought new tires for the trailer and had the bearings repacked for the trip east and, after a nice visit and lunch, Elmer and I began our trip back.

We stopped in Cleveland to show #8 off to the 55 Thistles gathered at Edgewater YC for the LE Districts July 12-14, 2013. While there was considerable interest in both the boat and her destination, we were somewhat

upstaged by the owner of #1 who showed up with that boat with new rails and ready to race. Thistle #8 was delivered to Mystic Seaport on Tuesday, July 16, and has been permanently accessioned into the Watercraft Collection.

Thistle #8 is a great addition to Mystic's Watercraft Collection. With the exception of replacement of the original plywood flotation boxes with Styrofoam, she is essentially the boat that left the Douglas & McCleod shop back in 1945. She still has the original wood-lead centerboard, the spruce spars (including on the mast a slot for a tang for a headstay to the upper spreaders, a specification eliminated in 1946, according to the plans), brass snubbing winches for main and jib sheets, and "lockers" with sliding doors under the forward grating. She is conspicuously lacking hiking straps and a traveler, both adamantly opposed by the Thistle's designer, Sandy Douglas, but ultimately permitted by changes to the class rules. The boat is in remarkably good condition considering her age.

I encourage everyone to visit Mystic Seaport and visit Thistle #8 in her new home and see the 450 boats in the Watercraft Collection, just call ahead to make an appointment.



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The shaping cedar strips with a bead and cove meant that we pushed through over 2,600 linear feet of cedar strips. Combined with cutting 1,300 earlier, that's almost three quarters of a mile. I could have made it easier for myself and purchased the cut and shaped strips already pre made from one of the suppliers of canoe and kayak supplies, but it was another part of boat building I wanted to experience firsthand.



Setting up the molds.

Using a wood rasp to slightly bevel the molds.



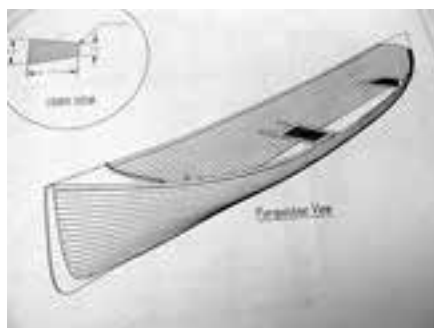
## 20 Mile Boat Build (Continued)

By Richard Honan

Busy as a bumblebee. I set up the strong-back, level, square and rock solid. From there I started setting up the molds from which the hull will get its shape. Everything must line up perfectly. Measure ten times, cut once.



Double checking the fairness of the curve on the laid out keel.



This is the shape of the finished hull, 16'x3' wide. Finished weight should be between 60lbs and 70lbs.

The form or mold for the bow stem. I'm actually applying clear packing tape to the forms to prevent the hull from gluing itself to the forms.



Checking for fairness.



Laying out the keel.

Using a thin batten as a guide.





Using a small battery powered circular saw to cut out the shape of the keel.



Double checking the fairness of the curve on the laid out keel.

Attaching the inner stem.



Layout of the station molds. The plans were purchased from the Newfound Woodworks, Inc. of Bristol, New Hampshire.



Leveling and stiffening the molds or forms.



These are the bead and cove strips. Western red cedar, 1/4" thick x 3/4" height.



Checking the planed bevel.



My grandfather's wood plane.

Applying clear packing tape to the molds so that the strips do not glue them selves to the molds.





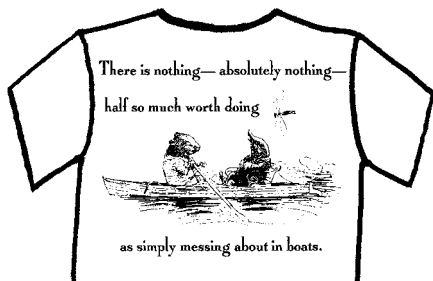
Sighting the first strip.



The staples hold down the new strip to the previous strip until the glue sets. The staples will be removed after the glue sets.



Applying the waterproof Titebond 3 glue to the cove.



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Applying the waterproof Titebond 3 glue to the cove.

The staples hold down the new strip to the previous strip until the glue sets. The staples will be removed after the glue sets or dries.



Checking the fairness of the strips or planking.



Nine strips attached. The shapes or molds are temporary. When the hull is completely striped it will be lifted off of the molds.



Stapling.

What the finished hull will look like.



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Rex and Kathy can put out some really great boats and then give them away. This one is going to be a Caledonia yawl. I already have the first bid in for the boat, trailer, sails and all of the other stuff they invariably throw in, \$5,000. I know that sounds ridiculous but I think that's what they took for the No Man's Land boat and it was worth twice that. They're like the rest of us, we can build um but suck at selling um. As you can see, Kathy does the hard part. Rex is still going with the "I broke my leg and can't get under there" story.



When Helen's sister Norma Ann was here to help me with the broken shoulder girl I needed a boat to go for river trips. *Helen Marie* was out of the water for a bottom job so I took the sailing rig out of the Core Sound 17 and ran it with the little 2hp Honda outboard. This is a great motorboat, it's very stable and roomy and goes like hell with this tiny motor and I was only running at half throttle. If you need a small motor, this is the way to go and they're air cooled and 4-stroke so you don't need to add oil to the gas. These ugly sleeveless shirts you see me in a lot of the time are my work shirts for the shop. They are cooler than shirts with sleeves and when they get all painted and glue smeared I just turn them inside out to get a whole new life.

# From the Tiki Hut

By Dave Lucas

How come none of our boats never get mentioned in the "just launched" or "new boats" section of any of the boat magazines? We seem to put out a new boat just about every week. I know, it's not as newsworthy as some guy who spent three years building an eight hour canoe, and we wouldn't want to flood the pages with too many strange boats, and heaven help us if they also included all of the weird floating things Washington Dan comes up with. Instead of pictures here are a couple of YouTube videos of some of my new kayaks. I'm still looking for a 14-footer under 20 pounds that won't rot and I can stay in without worrying about going swimming and spilling my beer. I think this first one may just do it. The second one is a kids boat I made using left over foam, you'll love seeing Crazy Steve trying that one out.

The new 14' foam kayak:  
<http://youtu.be/qOgu5zIViIs>

The new 11' kids' kayak:  
<http://youtu.be/1VyU1kz28A>



Jay Bliss is getting a lot of use from this funny looking hull he built. I keep telling him that it's upside down. First it was a big sailboat, then he cut off about 4' and made a smaller sailboat and now it's a high speed electric boat. I suppose next we'll see him pulling water skiers behind it, it's really time he made a new hull. I'm sure it'll be even stranger and faster than this one.



Which leads me into this one, the Crystal River Rats took their new big Civil War Scow on a long trip (about 50 miles) up to Cedar Key last month and say that everything worked out to perfection. One of the guys on the trip was Whalen, never can tell when you'll need a submariner. They were getting speeds out of this thing that were truly impressive. On a beam reach in 15 or so they were occasionally hitting 8kts. I suppose if you give a big flat bottom barge enough sail and enough wind it will haul ass.



Stan loaded up his Puddle Ducks to go for a race along the beach and broke a spring on the trailer. Being Stan he knew just what to do. He pulled out a couple of bungee cords, wrapped it all up and went on his way. I don't think I've told you this but Stan can come up with the most creative solutions to problems better than anyone I've ever met.

Once I was out in the middle of nowhere with Stan and Michelle in a small boat with a 5hp outboard. We were along the shore of Tampa Bay doing something with sea grass and when it was time to go home I pulled the starter cord and it broke off in my hand. Oh shit, what do we do now? No tools, it's getting dark and it's a two mile walk from where we were through the water along the shore to the nearest human, then who knows how long to figure out how to get the rig back to the ramp. Stan is calm and says, "no problem, I'll flip start it."

This is something that I bet none of you have even thought of doing, in fact I bet that no one has ever done this before. He took a small line, tied a loop in one end, put the loop over one of the blades on the three blade prop, wrapped it around a couple of times and pulled. We had to have it in gear to turn over the motor and if it actually started I had to get it in neutral really fast or no telling what would happen. I could just see Stan's fingers and arms flying all over the place slinging blood in the water for the sharks.

Well, believe it or not the sumbitch started on the second try and everyone had all their fingers. We made it back to the ramp a little after dark. Whenever I tell this story I get looks of disbelief and I'm sure they can't picture this being done. I do not recommend anyone doing this ever and I would never actually do it myself but I'm glad I was there to see Stan do it.



Kevin Lott is still working on his Cortez melonseed, I'm tempted to make another one myself just to get to play with the smooth hull. I sent him this picture of me in *Laylah* to remind him of what he'll have when he's finished. These little things are so much fun. Notice the lack of reef lines on this new sail, they just screw up the shape.

November has been the month for getting new boats in the water, probably 'cause we have to get the shop emptied out for Thanksgiving. We're always ready, rain or shine.



First on the list of boats that were built here at the shop and launched this month is Jim Enyart's 22' *Ninigret*. The Atkins design is one of the prettiest boats to come out in a while. This beauty runs and handles better than the best of the factory built boats in her size range because Jim kept her light and strong. Very few of these have been built, probably because they're complicated. Jim built her to his usual perfection. He fit the strakes, then pre glassed each one before the final installation. He was relentless in doing a perfect job of everything. All of the framing is carefully chosen pressure treated yellow pine that he planed down to his exact dimensions. The hidden wood in this boat will never rot. His drive for perfection took him about two years to complete working by himself about four days a week. Jim's still thinking about what kind of top he wants to put on, fold up or fixed. Our one rule and prime directive, "DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT HELPING ME," really, really applies to Jim. He does not appreciate unsolicited advice any more

than the rest of us and that's saying something. Crazy Steve comes in a close second or maybe Stan, no, maybe me or Howard and Sandy just smiles and waits for you to leave. Come to think of it, when you come to visit the shop you better just keep your hands in your pockets and tape over your mouth.



Stan's "Junk" came out of the shop this week. This was a six month build, a little longer than he usually takes because he made the whole thing up as he went along and had to wait for people to give him everything he needed for the whole boat. Actually he really helped with cleaning up the storage sheds. We accumulate all sorts of things that we'll never use so if something's been around for more than six months it's usually up for grabs. Stan knew exactly what he wanted, a small trailer boat that was big on the inside and was the most distinctive boat at any marina. He really accomplished that one. We just backed the trailer up to the boat, hooked up the winch and pulled it up. Talk about a surprise, something worked out just like he planned it.



It launched just as easily, rolled right off of its trailer. Notice the fold down stairs that turn into the side of the boat. *Ping* has a 6hp outboard motor and a gaff sail. He can steer from the back or from up front in the cabin. We put the sail up and the thing behaved better than expected. I did my best to turn it over but she's stable as a rock. I'll send more pictures as Stan adds more to the inside, he has blue leather cushions on the couch/bunk now.



Steve made a video of this boat, here on YouTube. Stan's Chinese Junk at Lucas Boatworks: <http://youtu.be/dwdM46Y0prw>.



The "Mega Yacht" didn't get launched this month but it's close. Howard put the stainless rail on today and the seats are painted and about ready to go in. He's pulled out and rebuilt the hydraulics for the steering and trim tabs as well as over hauling the outdrive and engine. He says she'll be on her trailer by Thanksgiving. This build has been going on for less than a year so far. It wasn't in the shop this time last year.





Sandy can whip out one of these little beauties in his sleep. He's made many of these that are 11' long but wanted to lengthen one to 14' to see how it works. This one has been planked up, sanded, glassed inside and out til it shines like a new dime and is getting the rails and little decks on now. It may be better if you didn't know how long this takes him to drag one of these out, he can come to the shop only a few days a week cause he volunteers at the hospital a lot and he gets booked for lots of social events. He started this particular boat two weeks ago and when you see him out there he never seems to be in a rush. Being around these guys could give you a real inferiority complex if you didn't know better.



Sandy says that his little canoe is supposed to ride this low in the water, Steve made some comment about a lot of excess weight in the boat but I think it's perfect. This is its first time in the water since he started it last week. At least it seems like it, Sandy doesn't mess around when it comes to these canoes.



OK, enough drivel about those other simple ass boats that anyone with half a brain could make. Here's what I'm talking about, here's a perfect boat, the only one that is of any actual use because it has cup holders, two of them in fact. Why do I value cup holders so much? Let's analyze this for a moment, what are boats? Why would anyone own a

boat? They're useless pieces of hardware that cost a ton of money, are always needing maintenance and even then don't work when you want to use them. Here it is, the one and only reason anyone owns a boat and they don't even know it. Boats allow you to drink openly in public? Where else can you float around in a beautiful location with a cooler full of cold beer and be accepted by one and all (unless you're in Canada). Nowhere, this is it, so boats without cup holders are useless, that defeats the whole purpose of owning a boat. Like a bedroom with no bed or a bathroom with no toilet, what's the point?



And if you're going to make one, make it cool. I did three of these in a week and this one came out pretty good, 14' long, 20 pounds, 28" wide and it goes like a runaway horse, if you're into kayaks, that is.



Museum John was dying to see how the Everglades Challenge boat floats so I installed both centerboards and we put it in. His custom design exceeded our expectations by a mile. It's stable and smooth and seems to offer no resistance to the water at all. Now he expects me to finish it.



He wanted to see how tender it was and what it takes to turn it over. As you can see, it takes a lot of effort to get it over on its side. When he righted it there was no water at all inside.



Cessna was worried about John so she jumped in to save him. He enjoyed the tow back to the beach.



Here's a link to the Dolphin boat and swimming club in San Fran. I've talked about what a bunch of totally crazy people they are. These people boat and swim in San Francisco Bay all year long. I guess the season doesn't really matter there 'cause it's always cold with strong currents and full of sharks and ships. <http://www.dolphinclub.org/>

And here's a link to a short video John Latta sent to me of what a tight group they really are. This is my kind of group; play with boats, drink and eat in their own hut and don't put up with a lot of crap. exactly like us. [watch?v=C7\\_SwBTf53o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C7_SwBTf53o)



Just in from Buffalo, Greg says it's going to be a white Thanksgiving and white spring and a white everything in between. There are three boats under that big pile of snow. I'm still missing the big picture as to why anyone lives there.



Winter's come to the Tiki hut also. We took the fan out and installed the stove mid-November and boy did we ever need it; it only got up to 60° that day and that's really cold for us Florida boys, not too cold to change out of shorts but still really frosty. We even bought a log splitter to keep the heat flowing and need lots and lots of firewood so if any of you local guys have any bring it out to the hut. We'll even let you play with the splitter if you bring beer.

I first became a sailmaker in the spring of 1994. My son Ryan and I had been active in building and racing soapbox derby cars in Indianapolis during his junior high years, but it had become painfully obvious that his high school growth spurt and changing interests were soon going to bring an end to his soapbox racing career. Already a tight fit, his feet, his butt and even his head had grown too large to fit inside the last of his streamlined derby cars and funding another was not open to question. In not much more than a year he would be looking forward to driving his own car and all our mutual building projects would likely be put to rest.

Knowing the inevitable was just months away, I was desperately searching for one last project that might capture his interest and take advantage of our recently acquired building and woodworking skills. It was sheer luck that a glance at the supermarket magazine rack fell upon a small sailboat gracing the cover of *Family Handyman*. The magazine, I read, was running a monthly series by a salty old New Englander named Harold "Dynamite" Payson on building a little sailing skiff called a "Cartopper."

Perfect! I thought. I had always wanted to learn to sail. Soon after, I showed the article to Ryan and I thought I saw just the slightest glimmer of teenage interest in his tolerant smile. I could imagine him thinking, "Hmmm. What better way to attract a certain freshman cheerleader than to take her sailing?" By late March we had finished the three part series as well as the tack and tape hull of our little 11' 6" Bolger/Payson Cartopper.

It was a sidebar on the next to last page of the series that contained the final shopping list that caught me by surprise, \$300 for the *Family Handyman* hardware kit, \$170 more for the Dacron sail from Dynamite. Either one of those options would cost me more than I had invested in building the boat itself and they weren't exactly a part of our family budget on an educator's salary.

Fortunately Fishers, Indiana, was a bedroom community to Indianapolis and the growing suburb was rife with both big box stores and local hardware merchants. So, thinking that there might be alternative materials that would still allow us to set sail, we headed to the local Do-It-Center Hardware, Menard's, Harbor Freight, WalMart, Home Depot and Lowe's to see what other options might get us onto the water for our first test sail. Somehow we managed to scrape together the necessary "alternative" hardware and latch onto a green 12'x16' polytarp that held promise as a sail.

A few days later we were headed for Eagle Creek Reservoir with the Cartopper strapped onto our Ford Probe for our much anticipated first ever sail. Little did we know then all the ramifications of that grand home-made boat launch.

Over 20 years have now passed since the launch of Cartopper and my first efforts to construct sails. After high school, Ryan became a Navy "nuke" and much later a supervisor of a nuclear power unit here in Florida. He's also directly responsible for his mom and dad moving here to Florida from the Midwest. Our son married his high school cheerleader girlfriend and together they made my wife and me the proud grandparents of two wonderful grandchildren, now 4 and 6, both of whom have their own "bookcase" sailboats built by their proud grandpa. (The sailboats double as bookcases when not being "sailed" by the grandchildren in their pool.)

## The Case for Poly Laminate Sails

By Dave Gray



Meanwhile, "Pee-pa" and "GG" are not quite retired as they supplement their social security and small pensions operating the growing firm known as PolySail International which offers up sails and sailmaking kits to others who want access to sailing but might not have the budget for professionally made Dacron sails. In the interval between the launch of Cartopper and today, I've constructed well over one thousand PolySails and probably sold an equal number of kits both here and abroad, perhaps enough to gain a very small foothold in the industry.

Over that period of time I've done a couple of surveys and interacted with countless potential customers and returning customers by email and on the phone, and I think that I've gained some insights into what has attracted both groups to polyethylene laminate (commonly known as polytarp) as a sail material. Listed below are some of the factors that seem to appeal to first time users the most:

**Cost:** Poly laminate sails cost very little compared to most sails and sail materials.

**Appearance:** Poly sails, especially white PolySails, look like traditional sails to many sailing novices.

**Individualization:** For others who might not want a "traditional" look, poly sails come in a variety of colors and trim options that appeal to those with a creative bent. On another level, the idea of flying a poly laminate sail just seems to appeal to some people who are still hippies or anti establishment at heart.

**Simplicity and ease of construction:** The idea of making a sail from a single sheet of material without having to panel the sail appeals to many to do it yourselves. So does the idea that these sails can just be taped together long enough to get out on the water to see if one enjoys sailing. Finally, there are some in this category who like the idea that these sails can be stitched up at home either by hand or with a home sewing machine.

**Options:** First timers can choose among finished sails, sailmaking kits or simple online instructions for making a sail entirely on their own in true do it yourself fashion.

**Simple logic:** Many have said that making a sail from an "alternative" material like poly laminate just makes sense. This seems to be true especially for those who have been given a sailboat or who have purchased a used sailboat for very little money and don't want to invest too much in trying out their acquisitions.

**Ease of access:** There is little wait time between the decision to purchase or construct a poly sail and actually going sailing. No great amount of nautical language must be mastered and many simple poly laminate sails like the leg o' mutton can be constructed in one day, zip tied onto a mast and stored that way when finished.

**Pride of ownership:** One survey revealed that a number of professionals from all walks of life had purchased poly sail kits because once they had built their first boats themselves, they also wanted to build their sails in order to make the entire project "theirs."

**Returning builders and customers** often mention one or more of the factors above for their affection for poly sails but also cite these additional factors as reasons for their second and later poly sails:

**Experimentation:** Poly sails allow sailors and boat builders to explore many options and types of sails for a single boat design or create an entirely unique experimental sail.

**Performance:** Some sailors feel that because of their one piece construction and slippery film surface, that their PolySails perform as well as or better than sails made with Dacron and other materials.



John Goodman prepares to launch his Poly-Sail powered pink and yellow *Chevy Duck* at the 2014 PD Racer World Championships. John had just completed sailing 200 miles up the Texas coast to help raise money for cancer.

**Durability:** Sailors are often pleasantly surprised at how well and how long their polyethylene laminate sails last. PolySail International, for example, offers a three year limited warranty on nearly all of their custom made sails that compares favorably with warranties of most large sailmaking houses.

**Functionality:** Quality poly laminate sails live up to their hype. At PolySail International

we regularly get feedback from customers expressing pleasure and surprise at their PolySail's performance. Many traditionalists who have only seen poorly made sails constructed from lightweight, non UV protected, blue utility tarps associate all poly laminate sails with these poly tarp sails while trumpeting the great advantages of Dacron sails.

Not many people know the chemistry of these two synthetics or they would know that they are both related polymers beginning as polyethylenes, low density polyethylene (LDPE) and polyethylene terephthalate (PET). One yields poly films and strands, the other polyester strands. For more on this subject check out this URL: <http://scifun.chem.wisc.edu/chemweek/polymers/polymers.html>. Most of the recent advancements in sailmaking today appear to be in the areas of laminated sails rather than woven fabric sails.

**Replication:** Often builders and sailors are involved with cash strapped organizations such as schools, scout troops or community sailing organizations that need multiple sails. It sometimes makes sense to purchase a large kit that allows members to make several sails from one large piece of material.

Our own research and experimentation have turned up some additional factors that may not be known even to the more experienced sailors:

**Safety:** Poly laminate sails are less dense than water. They float and so offer a safety factor in helping to prevent a capsized boat from turtling or turning completely over. Dacron, on the other hand, is between 30% and 40% denser than water and usually requires top of the sail or top of the mast flotation to prevent further rotation when the boat turns on its side.

**Advancements:** Competition among suppliers for the greenhouse and canopy markets is rapidly improving poly laminate

materials. Greenhouse users now expect five to six years from their poly laminate coverings. Some material is now sold "weldless" in widths up to 12', in other words, without the joining overlaps that occur every 6' in most tarps. The number of colors offered is already considerable and growing. Different weights of materials offer sailors many more choices for racing, cruising, and just "messing about."

**Stretch and resiliency:** Polyethylene laminates vary widely in terms of thickness in mils, weight per square yard in ounces, scrim count for warp and weft per square inch, and durability of UV protective coatings. All these factors can affect the stretch and resiliency of the material and its suitability for a sail of a certain size and purpose. One very distinct way that a well made poly laminate sail differs from sails made from other materials or inferior lightweight "hardware store or big box store" polytarps is that the heavier poly laminate material is very resilient, requiring very high loads per square foot before it will fail to recover its original shape. It is this same stretch and recovery that allows a PolySail to be constructed from a single sheet of material instead of having to be paneled to achieve shape.

Today poly laminate sails are being tested to their limits here in Florida and in the Caribbean nation of Haiti. On the west coast of Florida a 642sf gaff main and jib set of PolySails recently powered a 36' five ton Civil War replica scow on a 60 mile voyage from its home port at the Crystal River State Park to Cedar Key and back clocking over 8kts on the return trip. We believe that the 507sf gaff mainsail is the largest poly laminate sail ever constructed.

Meanwhile, in the poverty stricken country of Haiti, PolySails are playing their part in helping to rebuild the waterfront econ-

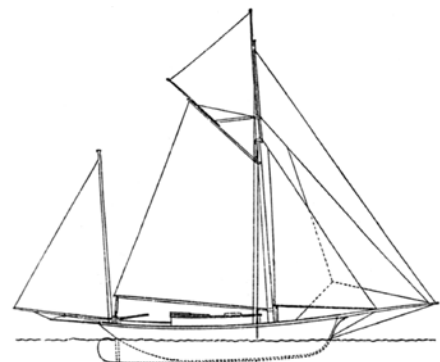
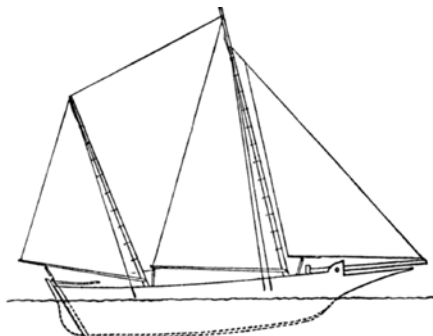
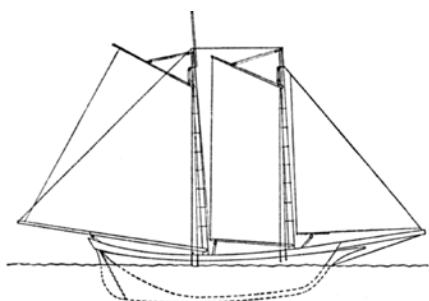
omy of the city of Cap Haitien. Under the leadership of Patrick Beliard and the Alfred Beliard Foundation, the fishermen/sailors of the beachfront fishing villages are gradually having their ragged sails replaced with new, colorful PolySails with the local sponsors' names and logos prominently displayed on each large sail.

Used daily in the heat of the tropics and subject to occasional hurricanes, this testing ground would be a challenge for any modern or traditional sail material. As part of this project, the foundation has already begun ridding the beach areas of trash, providing fresh paint for the fishing boats and holding races and parades for the newly equipped fishing boats. I was witness to the first of these events which drew nearly 1,000 spectators to the waterfront.

The use of poly laminate sails has largely been limited to the do it yourselfers of the English speaking sailing community for the last 15 to 20 years. But as these inexpensive, one piece sails continue to prove viable around the globe, we expect greatly expanded use by those seeking high performance at a low cost wherever they might live.



*Spirit*, a blockade running Civil War era replica scow, makes her way upriver during summer 2014 trials. The Crystal River Boat builders used period tools throughout during their three year construction of *Spirit*.



A gentleman and his daughter built a small sailing boat. They did an excellent job in both the construction and finish work. Now he is considering a little bit bigger boat and was talking about a 20 footer. I suggested that, for the Apalachee Bay area of the Gulf where he would be sailing, a boat in the 22' to 24' range would be better. Each area of the US coastline has unique sailing craft designed by those who used them to suit the local conditions. To take a boat designed for one area and use it in another area may result in problems.

A couple my wife and I knew years ago lived on their skipjack while attending Florida State University. They found their vessel not suited for the wind and wave action in this area of the Gulf of Mexico. What worked quite well in the Chesapeake Bay area did not do so well in the Apalachee Bay area. In the Apalachee Bay waters, the 22'-24' boat (with a centerboard) seems to handle the wind and wave conditions better than smaller or larger boats. Except for storms, a good wind is in the 10-15kt range and the waves are fairly long. At one point we sailed a Ranger 26 but it did not do well in light winds and with a draft of almost 4' we had to watch the tides to get in and out of Shell Point.

When considering a sailboat, it is time well invested to see what kind of boat is best suited for your area. One source of such information is to listen to those who have sailboats as to their satisfaction in sailing in the area and/or go out for a sail on their boats. Another approach is to look at what was historically the boat for the area. One such source is *American Small Sailing Craft: Their Design, Development and Construction* by Howard I. Chapelle. This book has excellent descriptions of sailing vessels by geographic areas of the United States and will give the reader a good idea of what worked in the past.

One problem with using Chapelle's excel-



## From the Lee Rail

By C. Henry Depew

lent resource is that some coastal areas did not have very distinctive sailing craft. For my area of the Gulf of Mexico Chapelle featured the "Gulf Coast Scow Schooner" which was used to move bulk cargo along the coast (mostly west of Apalachee Bay). At 30' long by 12' wide with a draft (gear up) of about 2', it would make a great "party boat."

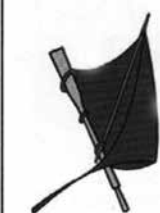
Some years ago an acquaintance did the research for the boat best suited for Apalachee Bay. He studied the wind patterns, wave conditions and other historical information. After much consideration he purchased a Douglas & McLeod 22. The boat was 22' LOA with a beam of 8.4' and draft with board down of 5.5'. With a sail area of 254sf it was about "right" for our wind and wave conditions. Off the wind it was a fine sailing vessel but unfortunately the boat "bobbed" in some wave conditions and could not "drive to windward."

One of the better "small boats" for our area was the Morgan 22 with a beam of 8' and a draft of just under 2' with the centerboard up (about 5' with board down) and a sail area of 238sf. The difference between the two boats was the beam and the forward entry design. The Morgan 22 was not as "roomy" as the D&M 22 but it went to weather better and was faster off the wind. Thus two boats, both designed by excellent naval architects, behaved differently

in our local waters. Going out on someone else's boat to see if you like it on the water before you buy one is still a good idea.

I was invited to give a talk on the development of the Shell Point area of Apalachee Bay and used air photos to show the development of the area over time. The Florida Department of Transportation has aerial photos made of the state on a three year cycle. These photos are now available to the public. Before they were all put up on a website we had to request the photo from them directly. For many people, the first accessible air photos came from TerraServer and were part of the original project that involved Microsoft and Compaq. The aerial images came from Russian satellite imagery from Sovinformspunik (the Russian Federal Space Agency) and GeoEye. In essence, we were using Russian satellite images of the United States. Since then, things have changed considerably and we have Google Earth and other online sources for images and air photos.

If you have access to good, high resolution air photos (or other satellite imagery) you can create your own local charts since oyster bars and shallow water show up quite well. One year the Tallahassee Sail and Power Squadron created a chart of a local area where those on the water depended on local knowledge to avoid the oyster bars and very shallow water. We used a black and white aerial photo as the base for the survey and went out and took soundings with sounding poles to check the depths. We created a very accurate chart of the existing channels and give out copies "For Information Only" to those interested. Copies of that old chart are still around and being used as references, even though the main channel is now marked by the county.



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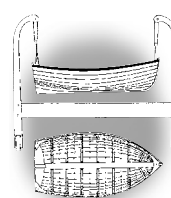


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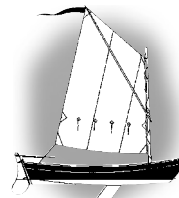
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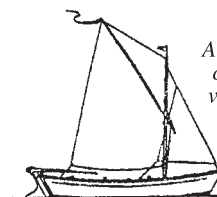
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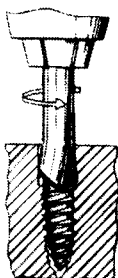
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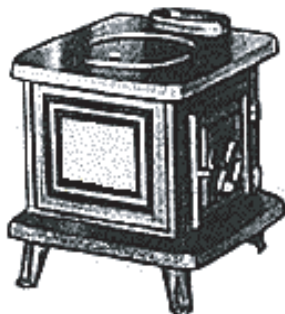
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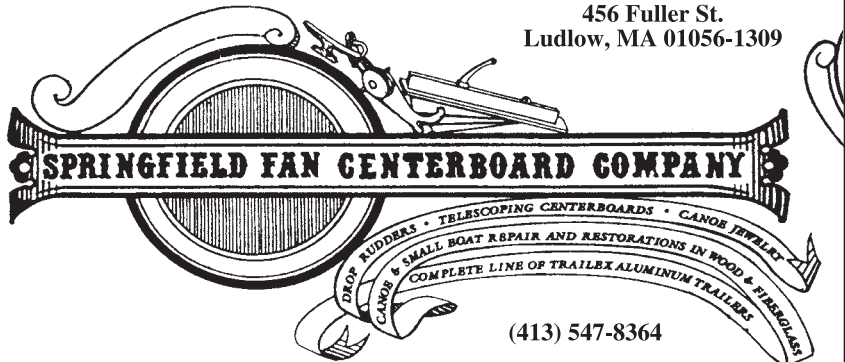
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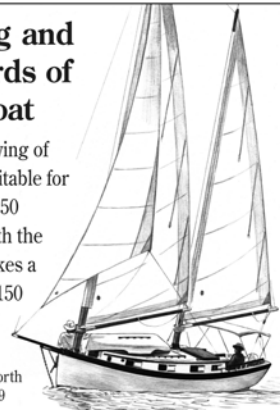


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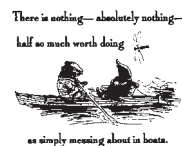
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Whew.

2014 was an interesting, productive year. The holidays are always wonderful, always draining and now we are on to a new year. Last year we bought the building and land on which we build our boats. (We wish we could have just dipped into our pockets and paid for it outright, but that's not the way things work in our world.) We also got a building permit, allowing us to build a substantial expansion onto our building.

Towards the end of last year we thought we'd try something new....normally our boats have lovely, book-matched cherry decks. We thought, why not try walnut? The result was gorgeous. The first boat we tried it on was one of our cedar guideboats...pricey but gorgeous. That boat sold before the epoxy had even cured. Then we thought, ok, see how it looks on one of our kevlar guideboats. We don't yet have a photo to share....but you can get an idea of how it looks from that first wooden boat. And, yes, black and white hardly does justice to the rich beauty of walnut, blended with the cherry gunwales and parting strip. If you'd like a color version of this photo, send us an e-mail and we'll shoot it off to you.

Another new wrinkle is...Steve found a gorgeous wine-stemmed rowing boat, stored for 50 years in the rafters of a boat house on the shores of Skaneateles, one of the Finger Lakes in upstate New York. He bought the boat and we are now transferring those lines to a mold so we can offer it in a kevlar composite in the spring. We think this boat will nicely accept a small motor and be ideal for trolling. Fingers crossed.

The only show we have so far set up in 2015 is Canoeecopia, in Madison, Wisconsin, Mar 13-15.

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